The Century Bible

Psalms
Vol. II

T. Witton Davies Ph.D.

THE CENTURY BIBLE

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

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The Century Bible

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The Psalms

(LXXIII—CL)

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
AND INDEX

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

OF

FRIEDRICH BAETHGEN

WHO, AS THIS WORK WAS BEING PRINTED, PASSED INTO ETERNAL REST (AGED 56), AFTER LONG YEARS OF WEAKNESS AND PAIN: IN SINCERE ADMIRATION OF HIS PIETY, LEARNING, AND JUDGEMENT AS TEACHER (AT BERLIN) AND AS CHIEFEST OF RECENT PSALM COMMENTATORS

THE AUTHOR

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THE CENTURY BIBLE

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII — CL

INTRODUCTION[1]

1. Name of the Psalter and of the individual Psalms.

The original text of the Hebrew Psalter has no heading. The Massorites or Editors of our Hebrew Bible prefixed such names to the books of the O. T. as were current in their day. 'Tehillim' (shortened to 'Tillim'), a word meaning 'Praises,' is the name prefixed by these Jewish Editors to the Psalter, a name far from suitable, since a large number of the Psalms are made up of petitions, confessions, complaints, and meditations. Five Psalms[2] are, in the titles, called 'prayers' (*tephillim*[3]), and at the close of Ps. lxxii in an editorial postscript the 'David' Psalms are described as 'prayers' (*tephilloth*).

Far more suitable is the title generally given to the book in the Greek translations, and also by Greek writers of the early Church: i.e. Psalms[4] and 'Book of Psalms[5].' The word 'Psalm' is the English form of a word which in Hellenistic Greek means a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The cognate Greek verb means 'to pluck,' 'pull': and then 'to play a stringed instrument with the fingers' (not with the plectrum).

The Greek word *Psalmos* is the one used in the titles of individual Psalms for the Hebrew word *Mizmôr*, and

[1] This Introduction deals almost exclusively with matters not treated of in vol. i.

[2] Pss. xvii, lxxxvi, xc, cii, cxlii.

[3] On the meaning of this Hebrew word see at lxxxvi, *Title.*

[4] See Luke xxiv. 44. [5] Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20.

it is generally assumed that the Hebrew has the same meaning that *Psalmos* has in Hellenistic Greek. But the Hebrew word seems to have meant, originally, a 'song' as such, for the cognate verb in both Assyrian and Arabic relates to the use of the voice: 'to cry out,' 'to sing,' 'to speak into a reed-pipe.'

The Greek word *Psalmos* may be thought of as having an extension of meaning comparable to that in our English word 'lyric,' which from meaning 'a song to be accompanied by the lyre,' has come to include all singable poems, or poems of that character. The Hebrew name *Mizmōr* may have had a similar original signification and a similar extension of meaning, but the evidence for this is not conclusive. Though the Hebrew name occurs in the titles of fifty-seven Psalms (always represented by the Greek *Psalmos*), it is not once met with anywhere else in the O. T. It occurs, however, in the recently discovered fragments of the Hebrew text of Sir.[1], but it is unfortunate that in this solitary example outside the Psalm titles it has a different meaning.

2. Divisions of the Psalter: Books, Groups, Psalms, Verses.

Owing to exigencies of space the author must refer, for fuller information concerning books and groups, to what may be seen in vol. i. pp. 6 ff. and at pp. 37 f. and 127 f. of the present vol.

Canon Cheyne[2] makes large use of the divisions within the Psalter—books and groups—for the purpose of determining the age of individual Psalms. His guiding principle is this: 'When certain Psalms, all of which agree in some leading features and positively disagree in none, have come to us from ancient times in one group,

[1] xlix. 1. 'As a *Mizmōr* (LXX "music") in a banquet of wine.'

[2] *O. P.* p. 6.

we are bound to assign them to the same period, though it is only in one instance that we can, from internal evidence, speak positively as to their date.' Armed with this principle of Psalm criticism, he comes to the conclusion that no Psalm is of pre-exilic date with the possible exception of a part of Ps. xviii, and this belongs to the reign of Josiah (640–609). The main difficulty in the application of the principle followed by Cheyne is, that our knowledge of pre-exilic history is much slighter than that of the later history. Perhaps if we were better informed as to the earlier history of the nation we should be able to find many incidents in that history suitable as occasions and backgrounds for the Psalms.

Prof. James Robertson in his *Croall Lectures*[1] draws a conclusion from the divisions into books and groups which is exactly the opposite of Cheyne's. This is how he reasons[2]: Each of the five Books existed, probably, as an independent hymn-book, before it was joined to the rest. The smaller Psalters must have had a separate existence before they were incorporated into the larger one. The individual Psalms would be yet older.

There is ground for believing, however, that Dr. Robertson is not quite correct in his suppositions. Books IV and V existed as one collection before they were broken up into two books. They have many common features which point to this conclusion: see the Introduction to these Books. Book I (except Pss. i and ii) was used by itself for a long time, as it contains older Psalms than the other books, and, in fact, it included all the Psalms known at the time of its compilation. But Books II and III were never used separately, though they contain groups that were, and to them Dr. Robertson's reasoning applies.

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[1] *Poetry and Religion of the Psalms*, 1898.
[2] Ibid., see Lecture VI.

Psalms: Number of, and Numbering of.

There are 150 Psalms in our Hebrew Bible, and also in the LXX and Vulgate—what is added to the LXX as number 151 being distinctly declared to be 'outside the number.' Some ancient Hebrew authorities give the number of the Psalms as 149, others as 147, the number being thus reduced by uniting one or more of the pairs 1 f., 9 f., 114 f. Though, however, the M.T. and the LXX agree in the sum total of the Psalms, they differ in the reckoning of the individual Psalms, and as the LXX and the Vulgate (which in the Psalter follows the LXX) agree together against the enumeration followed in the Hebrew and modern English, some confusion may be obviated if we put side by side the number of the Psalms in the M.T. and also in the principal versions.

Hebrew (*English, German, Welsh*, &c.)	*LXX* (*Vulgate and all Roman Catholic Versions*).
i–viii.	i–viii.
ix f.	ix.
xi–cxiii.	x–cxii.
cxiv f.	cxiii.
cxvi.	cxiv f.
cxvii–cxlvi.	cxvi–cxlv.
cxlvii.	cxlvi f.
cxlviii–cl.	cxlviii–cl.

It will be helpful to remember that in the Hebrew the number is generally one in advance of the LXX after Ps. ix: thus Ps. x in the LXX is number xi in the M.T. What is true of the LXX applies to the Vulgate and also to the Roman Catholic Versions, all of which are based on the Vulgate.

Verses. When the title of the Psalm includes three or more words it is commonly counted as a separate verse in the Hebrew Bible, but not so in the English versions nor in other modern versions, though the LXX, in most printed editions, is made to follow the practice of the

Hebrew Bibles. Some Hebrew titles are so long as to be counted as two verses (so Ps. li). The following rule will be found a useful one to follow: when there is a title of several words the number of the verse in Hebrew will be one in advance of the number in English: thus verse 6 in Hebrew will be verse 5 in English. It is of importance to remember this deviation in the numbering, since commentaries do not agree in their way of quoting, some following the numbering of verses in the M.T., others adopting the English enumeration. In a commentary on the Hebrew text it is a good practice to give the number of the verse in the Hebrew, followed by the number in English in brackets: thus vi. 20 (19). In a commentary on the English text the reverse is desirable. As, however, the dual numbering would occupy more space than can be spared in this small commentary, it is the English verse numbers that will alone be given.

3. The Messianic idea in the Psalms.

It must be remembered that in the Psalter we have a collection of songs, and not of theological treatises or even of prophetical utterances: and these songs are eminently subjective, as songs are apt to be. There are very few poems of the didactic kind, Ps. cxix being one. Though, however, these Psalms utter for the most part the feelings of the writers or of those for whom they write, yet they reflect the ideas and sentiments by which, at the time of composition, the nation was swayed, just as the songs of any age have on them the impress of that age, its governing moods, its dominant thoughts.

The word 'messiah' is of Hebrew origin, and means literally 'one who is anointed': see on lxxxix. 20, cv. 15. Among the Israelites, kings, prophets, and priests were all alike set apart for office by having oil poured on the head, a sign probably of the pouring forth of the Divine Spirit qualifying for the office. 'The messiah,' i. e. 'the anointed one,' is therefore a term that could with

equal propriety be ascribed to every king, prophet, and priest who had received the anointing of oil. As a matter of fact it is only the priest that is described in this absolute way—'the anointed one'—in the O. T.[1], though the king is characterized in a very similar way, for he is spoken of as 'Jehovah's messiah' (or 'anointed one'). This last expression is used in reference to Saul[2], David[3], and many of their successors, and it is also a designation of the Davidic king in general. Even Cyrus the heathen king is so spoken of[4]. The term 'messiah' is never applied in the O.T. to that king on whose advent all eyes were fixed and from whose righteous reign so much was expected. Dan. ix. 25 f. may be an exception, but that passage is of very uncertain interpretation, and cannot by itself be held to prove the contrary of what has just been stated. In his commentary on *The Epistles of St. John*[5] Westcott writes: 'The history of the title "Messiah" . . . is very remarkable. It is not a characteristic title of the promised Saviour in the O. T. It is not even specifically applied to Him, unless perhaps in Dan. ix. 25 f., a passage of which the interpretation is very doubtful.' The earliest certain occurrence of the word in the sense current among Jews and Samaritans in the time of our Lord appears to be in the 'Psalms of Solomon,' which belong to about B. C. 50[6]. But the ideas out of which the expectation of a future Deliverer grew are present in the oldest parts of the O. T., and they abound in the Psalter. The leading idea wrapped up in the term 'messiah' in the later sense is that of 'deliverance,' and the attitude of mind awakened by that thought is one of hope and confidence for the future. Now nothing stands out more prominently in the Psalter than the immovable confidence in the final issue of things which

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[1] See Lev. iv. 3, v. 16, vi. 15.
[2] 1 Sam. xii. 3, 15.
[3] 1 Sam. xvi. 6.
[4] Isa. xlv. 1.
[5] p. 189.
[6] See xvii. 36, xviii. 6, 8.

the writers display. When the nation is at its lowest, and most people would have lost hope, these religious poets and the people who sang their songs were buoyed up by a hope that never failed them: Jehovah can and will deliver the nation, or at least the righteous part of it, let their foes do their worst: see Pss. vii, xiii, xxii, xxxv, xxxvii, lix, lxviii, lxxiv, lxxxiii, xc, cvi, cxv, cxxiii, cxxvi, cxxx, cxliv.

In the so-called 'Royal' or 'Theocratic Psalms' there rings out such joy and jubilant trust as have rarely been equalled and never surpassed by poet or seer: see Pss. xciii and xcv–c. The cause of all the rejoicing is that Jehovah has once again asserted His sovereignty. He was king aforetime and all along, but He has given a fresh proof that His people are His in a special manner: that as their king He protects as well as chastises them. Jehovah is king; that fact supplies the ground for absolute trust in the present and for fearlessly facing the future. What is it that lies at the bottom of this attitude of confidence and hope? Mainly it is the covenant which Jehovah was believed to have made with Israel. Them only had He called forth from among all the nations of the earth, entering into covenant relations with them at the very beginning, even at Sinai[1], and undertaking to guide, protect, and prosper them on condition that they were loyal to Him. This conception of a covenant is most prominent in the O. T. writings which belong to what is known as the Deuteronomic period: i.e. in Deut., Jer., &c.: yet the thought meets us in Amos iii. 2 (cf. i. 9), and the word as well as the thought in Hos. vi. 7, viii. 1, xi. 11.

When the nation's affairs were at a low ebb the pious among them took heart of comfort from the covenant Jehovah had made with them through their fathers, and from the belief that, if they only repented of the sins which had brought upon them all their mis-

[1] See Exod. vi, xix, xxiii.

fortunes, He would renew the favours of the past. The earnest entreaties for pardon are to be understood only in the light of the covenant. They mean this: 'O do thou forgive us those sins by which we forfeited the blessings secured by the covenant with us. Help us now to have clean hearts and to live straight lives, so that we may secure for ourselves the covenanted blessings.'

Why did this nation alone of all earth's peoples have such confidence in the triumph of righteousness, for the idea of the covenant carries that with it? Surely God had revealed Himself to them as to no other people: though not for their sakes alone, but that through them the light Divine might shine throughout the world.

The Psalms in which this hope is embodied are in the strict, though not in the narrow sense, Messianic: the hope that breathes in them appears in the Gospel in a much clearer light, and, in addition, we have in Christ the basis of that hope.

Some have confined the name 'Messianic Psalms' to those Psalms which in the N. T. are quoted in reference to Jesus Christ. Judged by that standard there are but nine, or at most ten, Messianic Psalms. Some of the Psalms quoted in the N. T. in reference to Jesus Christ are less truly charged with the Messianic hope than those noticed above. The early Christian Fathers, followed by the mystic writers of the Middle Ages, saw a reference to Christ in every verse of the Psalter, and even in the titles: this is, however, not exegesis, but pious fancy gone mad.

There is a large number of Psalms which connect the nation's hope with a king of the line of David. When the good time comes, the throne will be occupied by a descendant of David, whose rule will be just. He will defend the nation from foreign oppression and from internal injustice. A reign of righteousness and prosperity will be inaugurated: sin, and that which follows in its trail, suffering, will be things of the past.

This expectation is based on 2 Sam. vii, which recites

the covenant made with David, according to which there was to be a king on David's throne for ever. In Pss. xviii, lxxii, lxxxix, and cxxxii blessings are promised or anticipated which no merely human king could bring. The Son of David is idealized: he is to be greater than any that had been, and the medium of greater blessings. We have this thought developed in Ps. lxxii, and in 'Psalms of Solomon,' xvii. The resemblance between these last is so great that one cannot but suspect that the occurrence of the name Solomon in the title of both is due to the fact that an idealized Solomon was thought to be described. Cf. our Lord's words, 'A greater than Solomon is here[1].'

In the Psalms of the kind now under consideration the expected king is not to be the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Deliverer: Jehovah is always regarded as playing this rôle. The King who is to come will reign over a people whom *Jehovah* has redeemed. Does this exclude the thought of a redeeming King? Of one who at once delivers us from our sins and is at the same time our supreme King? By no means. We may assume that God gave the saints of these ancient times as much knowledge of His ways as they were capable of taking in.

The Psalms contain nothing more definite concerning the conception of the Messiah than has been noticed above. We have the experience and expression of hope, such as Christ brings in perfection: we have also the hope and expectation of a king.

In later times the Messiah came to be regarded, not merely, as in O.T. prophecy, as the King of a redeemed people, but as Himself the Redeemer and Deliverer. The idea of Messiahship began to be separated from the notion of a civil ruler at the time when the later Hasmoneans or Maccabeans so grossly abused their power. Though not themselves of the family of David, they were for

[1] Matt. xii. 42 (Luke xi. 31).

a long time regarded by the bulk of the nation as realizing the covenant made with David: but continued corruption of life and of rule made that thought impossible, and the pious or Pharisee party, of which the 'Psalms of Solomon' are the manifesto, adopted the belief in a Messiah of a different kind, viz. one who would rule in men's hearts and lives.

Is there anything in the Psalter concerning a suffering Messiah? The answer must be an unequivocal denial, though such a denial is very far from being a denial of the doctrine itself.

What is to be said of those Psalms or parts of Psalms which are quoted in the N. T. in reference to our Saviour? Had the original O. T. writers in view the specific incidents in connexion with which these quotations stand in the N. T.? Each case must be considered by itself, and reference may be made to the notes on the passages involved in vol. i and in the present volume of the *Century Bible*.

It would seem that, at least in a large number of examples, the Psalms and other parts of the O. T. are quoted in a loose way as having some affinity of thought with what the writer is saying. Ps. viii. 5 is quoted in Heb. ii. 7 in a sense which the Hebrew forbids. The original says: 'Thou hast made him but little lower than God': in the N. T. it is: 'Thou madest him a little' (or 'for a little') 'lower than the angels.' It is the inaccurate rendering of the LXX that is followed in the N. T. Moreover, the original passage has in view man and only man, but in the N. T. the words are made to apply to Jesus. We have, in fact, a sort of allegorical reasoning: that which reads into things principles which they suggest, though no primary allusion to these principles lay in the words as first written. In Ps. xvi. 10 we have 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see the grave.' In the N. T. *Sheol* is interpreted by the Greek *Hades*, which is not identical,

and by both Peter and Paul the word parallel to *Sheol* (*lit.* 'the pit'=the grave) is taken after the LXX to mean corruption, and the reasoning of both writers depends wholly on this inaccurate rendering. Ps. lxviii. 18 is quoted in Eph. iv. 8 as describing the work of Christ, but the verse is altered so much as to make its meaning very different. In the Psalm the words are 'Thou (Jehovah) received gifts among men': i. e. the nations conquered by Israel through Jehovah's help would come bringing tribute to Jehovah as the real King of Israel. In the Epistle it is the ascended Christ who is represented as *bestowing on men* spiritual gifts: 'Thou (Christ) gavest gifts to men.'

We ought surely to deduce from these actual examples the principle on which in the N. T. references are made to the Psalms and to other parts of the O. T. when the person and work of Jesus Christ are under consideration. To do this, instead of coming with a ready-made theory, is to save our Lord Himself and the writers of the N. T. from a charge of inaccuracy which would otherwise lie at their door.

The great preacher and theologian Schleiermacher denied that the N. T. stands in closer connexion with the O. T. than with Greek philosophy. For him the O. T. was not needed as a support for the claims of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. The fact that He saves is the one unanswerable proof of His Saviourhood. He is the light of the world, and He shines by His own inherent light. His claims are pre-eminently in Himself. Schleiermacher missed his way in not seeing the shadowings forth of the Christ in the utterances of O. T. seers and poets. He was never a true student of the O. T.: never preached from it. To him the legalism of the Pentateuch represented the spirit and tendency of the whole of the O.T.: yet he was surely right in the emphasis he laid upon the testimony which Jesus Christ *is* to His own character and work.

4. Testimony of the Psalter concerning the Life beyond Death.

From early times students of the O. T. have been impressed by the comparative silence of the Scriptures of the O. T. with regard to a life beyond the present one. The machinery of O. T. religion was largely, and for a long period wholly, propelled without the help of that belief, now regarded as vital to the very existence of religion. That great Englishman, Bishop Warburton, wrote a book displaying marvellous insight for his time, in which he endeavoured to prove the divinity of the religion of Moses, from the fact that it was accepted and acted upon without the sanctions arising from the belief in a system of future rewards and punishments.

This belief appears to be wholly absent from the pre-exilic writings of the O. T., and it occupies only an unimportant place in the writings which came into being after the Exile.

This state of things is to be explained in a measure by the fact that in early Israel, as in the ancient world generally, the sense of personality was hardly realized. The human unit was the nation, the community, or, at most, the family, and not the individual man. The latter was thought of and derived his significance in connexion with the whole of which he was a part, and it was about that whole that these Israelites speculated, its character and its destiny. There can be no doctrine of a future life for the individual unless there is first of all a clear consciousness of the *ego* or *I*. Before this consciousness is clearly reached, the future thought of will be one for the society to which the individual man belongs. Under the dominion of this thought of the solidarity of the nation no eschatology of the individual could arise. Among the early Hebrews it was the nation that sinned and was punished: it was the nation that was encouraged to look forward to immortality if only it obeyed the command-

ments of its God. We relegate the principal part of human reward and penalty to the life beyond the grave, but in the thought of the Israelites it is in this present life that Jehovah metes out to men their deserts. Defeat by a foreign foe, exile in a foreign land—these and the like were conceived of as the punishment of national sin —unfaithfulness to the nation's God. The future contemplated was one for the nation, and it was of the nation that the early prophets spoke. There were in the insistence upon national righteousness the seeds of the belief in individual responsibility and in personal immortality: but so long as it was the nation, and not the individual, that constituted the unit of moral action and of responsibility, no eschatology of the individual could be developed.

There was indeed an eschatology of the individual, but it formed no integral part of Yahwism or the true religion of Israel, and never took root in that religion: I refer to the belief in Sheol. This belief was an import, a borrowed element from semitic heathenism. According to it when men die some shadowy remnants of their former selves go to a region between the earth on which man dwells and the subterranean waters[1]. This place was called *Sheol*, a word meaning probably 'what is low,' 'deep down.' It does not denote strictly the grave any more than does the Greek *Hades* or the Latin *Orcus*, though it derives much of the imagery with which it is clothed from the grave. In Sheol the departed spirits of good and bad meet together, and their condition in that realm of shadows seems quite independent of the moral character of the life lived on the earth: see 1 Sam. xxviii. 19; Job iii. 17, 19; Eccles. ix. 5. For the earlier and later conceptions of Sheol see on lxxxviii. 10–13. Dillmann, Smend, Charles, and Cheyne think that in the Sheol of the O. T. there are grades of happiness and misery corresponding to the life on earth of the persons: they refer for

[1] See *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f.

proof to lxxxvi. 13; Deut. xxxii. 22; Isa. xxxvii. 2; Ezek. xxxii. But these passages cannot bear the weight that is thus set on them, and they are not inconsistent with the view advocated by the late A. B. Davidson and S. D. F. Salmond that, in the Sheol of the O. T., there are no retributive distinctions; the bad man faring as well in the shadow world as the good one. Isa. lvii. 2 cannot, perhaps, be explained in harmony with the view here maintained if the present text is retained; but there are good reasons for holding that the M. T. is here corrupt: see Marti *in loco*. Those who care to pursue the subject further are referred to the following English works and the authorities therein cited: S. D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Book II, chap. ii; Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism and in Christianity*, chaps. ii–iv; A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 425 ff. See also Dillmann, *Handbuch der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, pp. 389 ff., and Smend, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionswissenschaft*(2), pp. 478 ff.

Charles, in his exceedingly fresh and interesting work, distinguishes several shades of meaning in the use of *Sheol* in the O. T., but the matter cannot be further discussed here.

With the breaking up of the nation at the Exile, thought gravitated from the nation to the individual, and it is what might have been predicted that in the writings of Jeremiah[1] and Ezekiel[2] the sense of personality stands out clearly. See also Job xxi. 16–34.

Sheol is several times mentioned in the Psalter; see xviii. 6, xxx. 4, xlix. 15 f., lv. 16, lxxxix. 49, cxvi. 3, cxxxix. 8, cxli. 7, and in every case it appears to the present writer to stand, in a general way, for the locality in which the departed were supposed to live. 'To be saved from Sheol' or 'from the pit' means simply to be preserved

[1] See xxxiv. 29-34. [2] See xviii. 2.

in the upper world, where fellowship with God is possible, and where He can be praised.

The doctrine of Sheol and the practice of necromancy, which is so closely connected with it, are really survivals of that ancestor worship which the Israelites found in Canaan, and which, in part, they adopted. But no doctrine of retribution in another life is involved in the belief in Sheol: that had to be elaborated out of Yahwism, and in Job and other late books it seems to be taught. But it is more than doubtful whether the Psalter, as we have it, has anything at all to say of future rewards and punishments. If the writers, or the community whose sentiments they utter, believed in a hereafter in which it will be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, they must have frequently referred to such a belief as a source of comfort to the faithful and as a ground of warning to the wicked. But, on the contrary, these singers long and pray to be saved from Sheol because once they die their opportunities of praising Jehovah are gone for ever[1]: they wish to have justice done to themselves and speedy punishment inflicted upon their foes, since after death retribution is impossible[2]. The promises made to the faithful relate to the here and now[3]. There are, however, four Psalm passages which have been thought by many to break the general silence about the life of bliss and woe beyond, viz. xvii. 15, xxxvii. 11, xlix. 15, lxxiii. 24: see the notes on these verses in this Commentary (vols. i and ii). In the last two verses the language is supposed to be suggested by Gen. v. 24, but in both cases the translation and meaning are, to say the least, too uncertain to make them prove a doctrine about which, admittedly, the rest of the Psalter is almost silent. Moreover, even if it be granted that in both these passages a spiritual world is referred to, they say nothing about a life following death, but speak only of a spiritual world attained without passing through death.

[1] vi. 5, lxxxviii. 10. [2] cxliv. 7. [3] lxxxv. 12, and often.

Both the other verses (xvii. 15 and xxxvii. 11) are better understood in the light of their context if their reference is confined to the present life. In xvii. 15 the second number simply repeats the sense of the first. 'Thy face' and 'Thy form' (not likeness) stand for the same thing. The Hebrew rendered 'when I awake' is simply a dittograph for the Hebrew of 'in righteousness'—the Hebrew letters are almost identical though the order is varied. I would then render: 'I being righteous' (in contrast with the wicked of the preceding verses) 'shall gaze on thy face: I shall be satisfied with thy form': i. e. 'He would be content to have fellowship with God in this world.' If the text is kept, translate the last member of the verse: 'I shall be satisfied when thy form appears (*lit.* "wakes up") to me.' The latter rendering has the support of the LXX, and is adopted by Wellhausen. Ps. xxxvii. 11 presents no difficulty when made to refer to the present life only.

We are not questioning, much less denying, the doctrine of a life beyond death in which the wrongs of time shall be set right: that is clearly revealed in certain late parts of the O. T.[1], and especially in the N. T.: the question we have been discussing is whether that doctrine is taught directly or indirectly in the Psalter, and to this we are inclined to give a negative answer. The truth of any doctrine does not depend upon the manner or time of its being revealed. The latter is a question of fact to be investigated as such.

Men that could suffer for their religion as faithful Israelites did, with no prospect of any reward hereafter, must have had very convincing reasons of some kind for believing in that religion. God must have manifested Himself to them in a very real and blessed way, for they counted it their highest joy and their greatest privilege to be with Him and to join in His praise.

If the Psalter says nothing about a hereafter, that may

[1] Job i. 21, xix. 25; Isa. xxvi; Dan. xii. 1.

constitute a powerful argument in favour of an earlier date than most moderns are inclined to assign to the Book of Psalms.

5. The Speaker in the 'I Psalms.'

More than half the songs in our Psalter are uttered in part or wholly in the first person singular, and in Germany they are, for that reason, generally called the 'I Psalms.' During the last fifty years or so much has been written concerning the significance of this 'I': whether it stands for the poet himself or for the personified nation or religious community. The view which has generally obtained, especially in former times, among Jews and Christians is that the 'I' is the individual Psalmist, his personal song being appropriated for congregational use because the experience of the author was typical, and the sentiments he expressed general. It will be noted that this is exactly what may be said of the hymns sung by Christian congregations, only it has to be borne in mind that promiscuous congregational singing, such as we are familiar with, had no existence in the temple: see the next section.

It has, however, been maintained by Hengstenberg, Reuss, R. Smend, Baethgen, and Cheyne, that we have in these Psalms not many voices uttering the sentiments of many individuals, but one voice, that of the Jewish community. Smend has written an elaborate essay on the subject[1], and in it he enunciates the following principle: the 'I' Psalms must all be interpreted as congregational unless exegesis makes this impossible. On the other hand, Nöldeke in the same publication[2] puts forth the contrary principle; every 'I' Psalm is to be interpreted as individual unless exegesis makes this impossible. Gunkel makes Nöldeke's opinion his own. It is this last view that was defended by Nöldeke's teacher Ewald, and

[1] Stade's *Old Testament Magazine*, 1888, pp. 49–147.
[2] Ib. 1900, p. 92 f.

it is supported by Duhm and Dr. James Robertson. The last named has an interesting and able treatment of the subject in his *Croall Lectures* [1]. Hupfeld refuses to admit that any of the 'I' Psalms are congregational, though Ps. cxxix and some other Psalms of the group are obviously of that kind. In a later utterance Smend denies that the three or four 'I' Psalms admitted in his Essay to be individual are other than congregational.

It will not be doubted by any one that, in the O.T., nations are personified and addressed in the singular. See Num. xx. 18, xxi. 22; Deut. ii. 27–29; Judges i. 3, ix. 19; Zech. vii. 3, viii. 2. See on cv. In these cases, however, the personification is manifest, and quite in keeping with ordinary literary usage. But it is a very different thing to say that in some eighty Psalms, full of subjectivity, crammed with deep feeling and spontaneity, the 'I' is not the poet, but a kind of impersonal society either political or religious—on this last matter opinion varies. When in the Psalm some 'I' complains of cruel and treacherous conduct on the part of foes, it is the Jewish nation, or the faithful part of that nation, that is expressing its sorrow, pain, and sometimes indignation at the treatment received from hostile heathen nations (Reuss) or from faithless Jews who have made common cause with the Babylonians, the Samaritans, or the Syrians. To say the least, such an extension of the meanings of 'I' and 'me' is very unnatural, and is to be allowed only in obedience to very imperious demands. What are the grounds on which this explanation rests? The principal are these.

1. The Psalter is said to be the prayer-book of the post-exilic temple, and its constituent Psalms were composed primarily and immediately for use in the temple. Now Smend and others take this for granted, but no conclusive evidence for it has yet been put forward. It may be, as most moderns agree, that our Psalter took on

[1] *The Poetry and the Religion of the Psalms*, chap. xi, &c.

its present form to meet the needs of temple worship after the Exile, and it may be also admitted that the individual Psalms are nearly all, if not all, of post-exilic date. But judging from the Psalter itself, and from the analogy of later hymns, Jewish and Christian, it seems much likelier that the bulk of the Psalms came from private authors, and that, originally, they were individual utterances. The hymns of Cowper and Charles Wesley were, in the first instance, with but few exceptions, prompted by what their authors thought and felt: they have been incorporated in our congregational Psalmodies because these Christian poets had an experience that is representative. It should be remembered that the Psalms were made for private use as well as for public worship. Ps. cxix was not made to be sung, and the same is probably true of other Psalms.

2. Cheyne (*O. P.*[1] and *Com.*[(2)] [2]) sees an objection to the individualistic interpretation of the 'I' Psalms in the fact that the sense of individuality was not developed among the Jews until late times. But if the Psalms are as late as Smend and Cheyne make them out to be, this sense of individuality had shown itself in the nation before any of the Psalms were composed, for it is reflected in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, not to mention the Wisdom Literature (Prov., Eccles.), in which it figures largely.

3. Smend says that the claim made in the 'I' Psalms to personal integrity and innocence can be understood only if we assume that the community, and not an individual, is speaking. But such claims are usually put forth as reasons why God should not afflict the writer, and what they amount to is the plea that no sin deserving the suffering endured has been committed: see lix. 3, and cf. xliv. 17 ff. A similar claim is set up by Job in the replies he makes to his friends; but Smend has his doubts as to whether 'Job' also is not the personified nation.

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[1] p. 265. [2] i, lxiv ff.

4. It has been pointed out as an argument for this view that in the same Psalms 'I' and 'we' often come together: e.g. Pss. xx, xxii. The 'we,' it is said, interprets the 'I.' Now the fact that both 'I' and 'we' are employed in the same context would seem to show that they have a different connotation. If the 'I' has the same meaning as the 'we' the latter would be used all through. When a poet is animated by emotions and aspirations which he knows to be the common stock of cultured and religious men, he is very apt to drop into the 'we,' identifying himself for the time with his fellows. In some cases, without dropping the 'I' and 'me,' he may feel conscious of being the mouthpiece of others. Thus Tennyson wrote of the 'In Memoriam': '"I" is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him.'[1] Yet in the 'In Memoriam' Tennyson expressed what he himself believed and felt, though he happened at the same time to be voicing the beliefs and emotions of the race.

It cannot be denied that many of the Psalms, some even of the 'I' Psalms, have a liturgical origin: they were made primarily for purposes of social worship, and it is natural to think that in them the congregation or the nation speaks. Many of these are compilations[2], and in the original context the 'I' had probably its strict force.

Smend and Cheyne call attention to the fact that in the choruses of some of the greatest Greek dramas the 'I' is used though it stands for the choir. But this feature is quite exceptional, and if it were common it would have little bearing upon the present case, which is that of lyrics with all the features of personal lyrics, yet interpreted by Smend, Cheyne, and others as the utterance of a society and not of individuals.

Isa. lii. 12–liii, the well-known 'servant' passage, is

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 305. [2] cxxxv f.

adduced as confirmation of the congregational interpretation of the 'I' Psalms, because in that section the nation is portrayed as one individual. But this is hardly analogous with songs articulated in the first person. Moreover, the principal 'servant' passages in Isaiah are thought by Cheyne and most recent scholars to be excerpts introduced into their present context from an independent poem now lost as such. We know too little what these passages meant when first composed to be able safely to draw conclusions from them. There are many considerations which favour the natural interpretation of the 'I' in the Psalms now under consideration, though Psalm cxxix and some others are exceptions.

1. In many of these Psalms no other interpretation is possible. Take the following examples:—

'For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But Jehovah will take me up,' xxvii. 10.

'Violent witnesses rise up: They ask me of things I know not,' xxxv. 11.

'Behold I was shapen in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me,' li. 5.

'But it was not an enemy that reproached me; ... but it was thou, a man mine equal, and my familiar friend,' lv. 12–14.

'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, And an alien unto my mother's children,' lxix. 8.

'Cast me not off in the time of old age; Forsake me not when my strength faileth,' lxxi. 9.

'O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; Give thy strength unto thy servant, And save the son of thine handmaid,' lxxxvi. 16.

'At midnight I will arise and give thanks unto thee,' cxix. 62.

Further reference may be made to xxii. 22, 25: how could the congregation or the nation make vows, and in what way was it possible for it to praise God in the midst of itself?

All the so-called 'sickness Psalms' supply strong evidence of the same kind: e. g. vi, xxii, xxx, xxxviii, xli, lxix, lxxxviii, cii.

2. In other lyrics articulated in the first person no doubt is felt or has been expressed that the poetry is the utterance of the poet's mind.

3. These Psalms have such spontaneity and intensity of feeling as to make it almost certain that they are the genuine outcome of individual experience. The attitude of the writers is not objective but strongly subjective: they express the thoughts and feelings by which they themselves were swayed. If we reduce them to the level of mere spokesmen, hired to put into singable form the prevailing sentiments, we rob the Psalms in question of their reality and force. It is the individual character of the Psalms which has been, in all ages, their charm, and which makes them an unfailing source of comfort and encouragement to men struggling with sickness, sin, or outward foes. The God who was the refuge and strength of these ancient saints is still that, and, in Jesus Christ, even more, to tried and tempted ones in our own time. The natural expression which comes to a reader is likely to be the right one, and there can be no mistake as to what the impression is on the great majority of readers. To empty these Psalms of their individual character is to take from them their chief religious element. They become then, as Smend as good as admits, sectarian, or, at most, political poems, though, of course, charged with the theocratic spirit. They body forth the anguish of the persecuted party or nation, and contain prayers that Jehovah may defend His own people: but the element of personal religion is practically expunged.

The Church in all ages has seen in these songs the heartfelt cries of pious souls of the olden time. They express the deepest sense of sin, the desire for pardon and a faith in God, which has rarely been equalled and never surpassed. They were sung in the temple, and they

are sung in the modern Synagogue and in the Church because they voice the convictions and aspirations of all ages.

Smend eliminates from other O. T. songs their individual character, as e. g. Miriam's song (Ex. xv), Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 1 foll.), Hezekiah's prayer (Isa. xxxviii. 10-20), and Habakkuk's Psalm (Hab. iii). Now the question is not whether these poems were composed by those with whose names they are associated, but whether the original reference in them is personal or national.

6. Sacred Music among the Ancient Hebrews.

It is surprising how meagre our information is regarding the music of the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Hebrews. This is largely due to the fact that no system of notation in use among these ancient peoples has come to us, for our present systems of musical notation are of comparatively recent invention, the old notation being generally ascribed to Guido d'Arezzo (d. 1050). There are good grounds for concluding that the melody of the ancient Hebrews was of a simple, elementary, and variable kind, such as obtains among Oriental peoples of our own time. We owe our fixed unvarying melody to musical script, just as fixed spelling is due, largely, to the printing press. Among the Arabs of Egypt and Palestine the same tune is sung with considerable variation in details though with general agreement, and it is seldom that Arabic music goes outside the octave. There is among the same people a great fondness for loud, shrill, clanging sounds: it is the quantity of sound and not its quality that tells. Hence it is that the drum and other instruments of percussion are much favoured in the East. The kind of music thus briefly described is that which, in all probability, obtained among the Hebrews in Bible times, for in the unchanging East one may safely argue from the present to the past within reasonable limits.

Neither harmony nor counterpoint was known until some time on in the Middle Ages: one may therefore conclude, with fair confidence, that these characteristics of mediaeval and modern music were absent from the music of the Bible. The lack of these was made up to some extent by a large use of antiphony, different parts of the poem being sung by different persons[1]. Thus in Ps. cxxxvi the first part of each verse would be sung by the whole choir, the second by a part of it. See Introduction to Pss. cxv, cxviii. Variety of voice and of instrumental sound ('timbre') was another thing that helped to fill up the place now held by harmony and counterpoint. Cicero says of the ancient Egyptians that 'they considered the arts of singing and playing upon musical instruments a very principal part of learning[2]': there is no evidence that this was the case among the early Hebrews, though music of some kind was traced by this people to a very remote period in the past[3].

Musical Instruments.

In primitive times musical instruments were played to the accompaniment of the voice, but rarely, if at all, for their own sake as we now play the piano, violin, &c. Wind instruments do seem, however, to have been blown for certain purposes, as in summoning to war, announcing the advent of a festival, &c., but even these were hardly used by themselves for musical purposes.

Our only direct contemporary evidence with regard to the musical instruments of the Bible is that which the Bible itself supplies. This is often so meagre and indecisive that without the aid of pictorial representation it is often impossible to make clear to ourselves what were the forms and what the uses of these instruments. In Madden's *Coins of the Jews*[4] illustrations of some

[1] See Psalms xiii, xx, xxxviii, lxviii, lxxxix, &c.
[2] *Tusc. Quest*, lib. i.
[3] Gen. iv. 21
[4] Second edition, 1885.

stringed instruments in vogue among the Jews are given: these are taken from Jewish coins of about B.C. 66–70, so that they do not carry us back very far. The monuments of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia supply us with a goodly number of pictures of instruments used among the peoples of these countries, and since these are very similar it is exceedingly likely that the Jews had instruments closely resembling those of their neighbours.

The musical instruments mentioned in the Bible are thus classified:—

1. Wind instruments.
2. Stringed instruments.
3. Instruments of percussion.

Examples of each of these three classes may be seen in Ps. cl.

Of the wind instruments associated with modern worship no one is so important as the organ: but, though the word occurs four times in the A.V.[1], it is demonstrable that what we call the 'organ' did not exist for some centuries after the Christian era set in, because at no earlier time was the device of the keyboard known. For 'organ' the R.V. substitutes 'pipe'; the Hebrew word (*'Ugab*) means a wind instrument of some kind. See on Ps. cl. 4. Stringed instruments are of the harp and of the violin kind. In the former the strings are fastened at the ends alone, and have no sounding-board to which they are attached. In the case of the violin class of instruments there is a sounding-board across which the strings are stretched, as e.g. in the lute, guitar, violin, &c.

In the O. T. it is the stringed instruments that are almost exclusively associated with worship, and of these three only are mentioned, all of the harp kind, viz. the harp, lyre, and trigon. In the E.VV. the words used are psaltery, harp, and sackbut, respectively. The above

[1] Gen. iv. 21; Job xxi. 12, xxx. 31; Ps. cl. 4.

rendering gives the results to which the present writer has been brought by a somewhat careful examination of the available evidence, though lack of space makes it impossible to discuss the question in this commentary. The 'trigon' (E.VV. 'sackbut') is mentioned in Dan. iii. 5, 7, 10, 15, and was probably a triangular instrument of the harp kind, but having four strings only. The other two stringed instruments, Heb. *nebel* and *kinnor*, are frequently named in the Psalter, and in our English versions are translated 'psaltery' and 'harp' respectively. By the former our translators seem to have meant a kind of lute with convex belly, a mistake due to the supposed etymology of the word. But there is good reason for concluding that no instrument of the violin kind was known among the Hebrews, and, moreover, the *nebel* was heavier and larger than the *kinnor*, for the latter could be hung on poplar (or willow?) trees [1]. Both were made of wood [2], and both were portable [3]. In Ps. xxxiii. 2 mention is made of a *nebel* of ten strings, implying that the number of strings varied, though some think that in this passage a separate instrument of ten strings is meant. See on the verse in vol. i.

The word 'psaltery' in the E.VV. is from the Greek *psalterion* which generally stands for *nebel* in the LXX; but this word means strictly a stringed instrument of any kind: in English, however, the word came to have a more specific meaning: see above. 'Harp' is the best English word for *nebel*, and 'lyre' for *kinnor*. In the latter the strings were fastened at the ends only, as in the case of the harp, but the instrument was smaller, the number of strings were fewer, and these strings were stretched usually in a vertical, though sometimes in a horizontal, direction. See the illustrations.

Of the wind instruments reference will be made

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[1] See Ps. cxxxvii. 2. [2] 1 Kings x. 12.
[3] 1 Sam. x. 5; 2 Chron. xx. 28.

to two only, viz. the *shofar* or ram's horn, and the *khetsotsera* or trumpet, which are, in this volume, called 'cornet' and 'trumpet' respectively. It is a pity that the English versions do not represent each by a distinct word (as in the R. V. might especially have been expected), instead of confusing the mere English reader by translating the two Hebrew words by 'trumpet,' except where both words occur in the same connexion,

FIG. 1.
Assyrian Harp.

FIG. 2. Jewish Lyres (from Jewish coins of dates B. C. 70–66). See Madden's *Coins of the Jews*[2], pp. 231, 243.

'cornet' and 'trumpet' being then employed as above. In four cases the Hebrew word for horn is translated 'cornet,' rightly in so far as the meaning is concerned, though in ten other passages the same word is rendered 'horn' ('raising the horn,' &c.).

The shophar or cornet is simply the primitive form of the metallic trumpet, and served the same purposes, though some have tried to show that the cornet was used

on secular occasions[1], the trumpet having a specially religious use. But it is in the later literature of the O. T. that matters of ritual, music, and the like are dealt with, and in the later time the trumpet takes the place of the shofar. It may be gathered from Rabbinical authorities that in later times the word 'shofar' came to be used for the straight metallic trumpet. The Mishna permits the use in the synagogue of the horn of any clean animal except the cow, but from the earliest times the synagogue prefers the ram's horn, which under the influence of heat is flattened and otherwise adapted. The trumpet, as represented on the arch of Titus in Rome, is straight and apparently metallic. The cornet was, of course, crooked, though a good deal straightened out before being used. It can be proved from the O.T. that the shofar was blown on sacred[2] as well as secular occasions, and that the trumpet was blown on secular[3] as well as sacred occasions. The relation between the cornet and the trumpet is much the same as that existing between flint and steel knives, and in the continued employment of the cornet or shofar in the synagogue we have a survival corresponding to the use of stone knives in circumcision at times when better knives must have been at hand[4]. It may be repeated here that stringed instruments (harp and lyre) appear to have been alone used in public worship proper, and it is significant of this that the technical words for Psalm, Greek and perhaps Hebrew, mean a song or hymn to be sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. But see Introduction, p. 3 f.

The function of the harp and lyre was to keep the time rather than to supplement the voices. Indeed, it is the sense of rhythm rather than that of melody which makes for the Oriental the principal charm of music. This sense lies nearest the primitive instincts (cf. respiration and

[1] Judges iii. 27 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 3 ff. ; 2 Sam. xv. 10 ; Amos iii. 6.
[2] Lev. xxv. 9. 13 ; Joshua vi. 5 ; 2 Sam. vi. 15.
[3] 2 Kings xi. 14 ; Hos. v. 8. [4] Joshua v. 2.

circulation of blood, both rhythmic movements), and it is a leading feature in poetry (cf. Hebrew parallelism) and in the dance.

Many and bitter have been the discussions in the Christian Church as to the propriety or otherwise of introducing musical instruments (organ, violin, &c.) into our churches to help the worship. The Fathers, and also the Anglican Church—judged by its homilies—pronounced a negative opinion, and the Puritans were strongly opposed to any except vocal worship in churches. Modern churches of all creeds seem to have settled down to a contrary view, and there are few places of worship to-day without either organ or harmonium.

Where was worship conducted among the Israelites? At all the sanctuaries of the land, as much at the high places as at the temple, until in the time of Josiah [1] (d. B. C. 609), or perhaps in that of Hezekiah (d. B. C. 699) [2], these were condemned and suppressed. Since no one was allowed to enter the house or the temple proper, except the priests, one has to dismiss the idea that Psalms were sung in the sacred structure itself. In the first temple there was but one court [3], and it must have been in this that the singers and players led the worship of the people on Sabbaths and festivals. In the second temple there were an inner and an outer court, and since, during the existence of that temple the singers and players belonged to the Levites (but see below) in the main if not wholly, it is extremely likely that the choir and the orchestra or band took up their position in the court of the Israelites.

Who were the musicians, those who sang and those who played the instruments? Though our data for judging of the methods of worship in vogue among the

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 9.

[2] 2 Kings xviii. 1 ff.; Isa. xxxvi. 7: see, however, Marti on the latter verse.

[3] See Article 'Temple' (by the present writer) in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

Jews before the Exile are slight, there seems good reason for concluding that there was no distinct class of musicians, no musical guild or order. The choir and band were made up of picked men[1] (no women of course), though these would be very often priests and Levites. The set of influences which led to the increased power of the priests and to the enlargement of their order by the addition to them of the Levites issued in having the functions of sacred song limited to the Levites. This last is the state of things which seems to have prevailed during the whole period represented by the Psalter. But though the lay Israelite might not take part in temple music he was supposed to share in it vicariously, as is the case with women in the modern synagogue.

It has to be remembered, however, that our Psalm book is not merely a collection of the hymns sung in the temple area. Many of them could not have been sung at all anywhere, as e.g. Ps. cxix. which was probably composed to be read privately; Ps. cxiii f., which seem to have been chanted in the family circle; Ps. cxli and others appear to have been intended for use by individuals. See also lix. 16, xcii. 2, cxix. 62. It cannot be conceived that male Israelites who were not priests or Levites worshipped at the three annual feasts at Jerusalem alone, and then only by proxy. Nor is it likely that Israelitish women were wholly excluded from participation in the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

The synagogue was, until after the final destruction of the temple, a mere place of instruction, in which the scriptures were read and expounded, but no worship was carried on. There must have been united and individual worship in Jewish homes, and in that worship the Psalms played, it is highly probable, a larger part than it is the custom to think.

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[1] See 2 Sam. vi. 5; Isa. xxx. 29; Amos vi. 21–23.

ABBREVIATIONS.

1. General.

acc. = accusative.
fem. = feminine.
gen. = genitive.
Hiph. = Hiph'il.
impf. = imperfect.
impv. = imperative.
masc. = masculine.
Ni. = Niph'al.
pass. = passive.
perf. = perfect.
Pi. = Pi'el.
prep. = preposition.
pron. = pronoun.
DB. = Dictionary of the Bible (Hastings).
Encyc. Bib. = Encyclopaedia Biblica.

Hiph., Ni., and Pi. denote forms of the Hebrew verb which express (most commonly) the following modifications of the simple idea of the verb (i.e. the Qal) : causative, passive, and intensive—respectively.

J (Jahwist), E (Elohist), JE (Jehovist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly Writer) stand for the authors of the documents on which the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) is supposed to be chiefly based.

2. Texts and Versions.

1. Hebrew.

M.T. = Massoretic Text. (That of the ordinary vocalized Hebrew Bible.)
keth. = kethib. (The consonants and the implied vowels of the Hebrew Bible.)
qr. = qĕrē. (The text as emended by the Massorites.)
Heb. = Hebrew.

2. Greek.

LXX = The Septuagint.
Aq. = Aquila.
Theod. = Theodotion.
Sym. = Symmachus.

3. Latin.

Jero. = Jerome.
Vulg. = Vulgate (on the Psalms, a mere translation of the LXX).

4. English.

P. B. V. = Prayer Book Version.
A. V. = Authorized Version.
R. V. = Revised Version.
E.VV. = All these three English versions.
A. R. V. = A. V. and R. V.
O. T. = Old Testament.
N. T. = New Testament.

The (*Saadias*) Arabic (*Ar*) and Ethiopic (*Eth*) versions have been consulted, and are occasionally referred to. The Peshitta (Syriac) and Targum (Aramaic) have been continually used.

3. Commentaries.

The following notes alone are here necessary.

Ewald = the 2nd Edition of his Commentary.
Cheyne O.P. = the Bampton Lectures on the *Origin of the Psalter.*
Cheyne (1) = *The Book of Psalms* (1888).
Cheyne (2) = *The Book of Psalms* (1904).
Gunkel = *Ausgewählte Psalmen erklärt und übersetzt* (1904).

The three editions of Hupfeld, the fourth (German) of Delitzsch, the second and third of Baethgen have been used. Unless the contrary is indicated, it may be assumed that the latest edition of each work is cited. When it is necessary to distinguish editions bracketed numerals are employed: see Cheyne (1), &c., above.

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

BOOK III.

For general remarks concerning the formation of the Psalter and the division into five books see pp. 4 f., 37 f., 127 f., and vol. i. p. 6 ff.

Books II and III were at first apparently a miscellaneous collection containing within itself several minor collections of which the following may be noted.

1. *Davidic Psalms*, li–lxxii.

2. *Levitical groups*, viz. Korahitic and Asaphic.

Books II and III are almost wholly Elohistic. Books I, IV, and V are, on the other hand, Yahwistic. In Pss. xlii–lxxxiii Elohim occurs 200 times, Yahweh forty-three. In lxxxiv–lxxxix Elohim is found ten times alone and four times in combination with Yahweh; the latter being found thirty-six times. For the difference between these two Divine names see vol. i. 358 f., and cf. the note in this vol. on cviii. 3.

Asaph Psalms. Ps. lxxiii is the first of the eleven Asaph Psalms in Book III, Ps. l (Book II) being the only other one. No doubt these twelve formed a collection which originated and was used among the members of the Levitical guild of Asaph. That authorship is not implied by 'A Psalm of Asaph' seems shown by the title 'A Psalm of (or belonging to) the Korahites,' found before Pss. lxxxiv f. and nine other Psalms. We have no Biblical information at all concerning an individual called Asaph or of his descendants outside the books Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (which formed originally but one Hebrew book arranged in the order just given), the more strictly historical books —Samuel and Kings—being quite silent about them. According to Chronicles—Asaph, Heman and Ethan were chosen by the Levites to conduct the music when David brought up the ark to Jerusalem[1]. David is said to have appointed Asaph to take charge of the music after the ark had been fixed[2]. Under their father's superintendence Asaph's sons presided over the twenty-four courses of musicians[3], and they took part in the dedication of the temple[4]. All these intimations, however, occur in a book

[1] 1 Chron. xv. 16–19.
[2] 1 Chron. xvi. 4 f., 37.
[3] 1 Chron. xvi. 1 ff.
[4] 2 Chron. vi. 12.

73 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 Surely God is good to Israel,

written for other than historical purposes, a book not older than B. C. 300, though the period described above is about seven hundred years earlier. In the time of the writer there were Levitical guilds called Asaph, Heman, Ethan, and Korah, and the individual names were, in the manner of ancient times, invented to account for the existence of the guilds thus designated. The musical arrangements ascribed to David's time in Chronicles could not, for many reasons, have existed so early.

Psalm LXXIII.

Theme. The problem presented by the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous, and its solution through faith in God.

I. *Contents.* (1) The problem, verses 1–14. The poet contrasts God's general dealings with His people and his own recent suffering (verses 1–3), and then passes on to speak of the prosperity and pride of the wicked (verses 4–9) and the evil effect of their example (verses 10–14).

(2) The solution of the problem, verses 15–28. He seeks an oracle from God in the temple, and obtains a satisfactory answer (verses 15–20). He confesses the folly of his previous reasoning, for in the end it will be ill with the wicked and well with the righteous (verses 21–28).

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm to connect it definitely with any one period.

That it is not pre-exilic is proved by the style of the Hebrew, which is in parts late, and by the problem raised in the Psalm, the happy lot of the wicked in this world and the misery of the good. This problem did not exist for the pre-exilic mind, or at least found no expression. The Psalm is not exilic, for the writer is at Jerusalem and the temple is in existence (verse 17).

The problem of the present Psalm is that of Pss. xxxvii, xlix, and xciv, and also of Job, and in a modified form of Eccles., all of which are post-exilic. This Psalm may have been composed under the stress of the persecution of the Samaritan party in Nehemiah's day, or it may owe its existence to the Syrian persecution of the Maccabean age. But such problems as the one that here confronts the Psalmist may occur to a thoughtful mind at any time.

1–14. *The prosperity of the wicked.*

1. Render: 'God is only good to the upright one,
Even Jehovah to the pure in heart.'

Even to such as are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet were almost gone; 2
My steps had well nigh slipped.
For I was envious at the arrogant, 3
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For there are no bands in their death: 4
But their strength is firm.
They are not in trouble as *other* men; 5
Neither are they plagued like *other* men.
Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck; 6

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good: i. e. 'kind,' as in lxxxvi. 5.

to Israel: read, 'to the upright one': the Hebrew differs very little.

2. Render: 'But as for me my feet were very near giving way: There was, as it were, nothing to prevent my steps from slipping.'

Though he now admits the general principle that God is kind and only kind to the upright, yet his own unhappy lot had almost led him to fall away from faith in the Divine love.

3 ff. give the grounds for the shock to faith described in verse 2.

3. envious. The construction of the verb proves that it is properly rendered in the R. V.: so xxxvii. 1. Wellhausen's rendering 'indignant' is excluded by the preposition in Hebrew.

arrogant: we should probably render 'fools,' understanding the word in its ethical sense, as in v. 6, lxxv. 5.

4. Render: 'For they have no pangs,
Sound and fat is their body.'

bands: this word must be assumed, like another Hebrew word (*Khebel*), to have the double meaning, bands and torments: here the latter.

in their death: dividing the Hebrew letters differently, as should be done, we obtain the above rendering.

strength: the Hebrew word, occurring here only, means, according to an Arabic cognate, 'body.'

5. Render: 'They are not in (such) trouble as (other) men; Nor are they smitten (of God) as the (rest of) the human race.'

plagued: the Hebrew word means being smitten of God: see verse 14; Isa. liii. 4.

6. Render: 'Therefore (because more happily situated than

Violence covereth them as a garment.
7 Their eyes stand out with fatness:
They have more than heart could wish.
8 They scoff, and in wickedness utter oppression:
They speak loftily.
9 They have set their mouth in the heavens,
And their tongue walketh through the earth.
10 Therefore his people return hither:

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other men), pride (is made to) adorn them as a necklace: The garment of violence clothes them.'

These people take pride in their pride: violence is as present to them as the clothes they wear.

7. Render: 'Their iniquity issues from fatness (of hearts): The imaginings of (their) heart overflow' (becoming violent speeches).

eyes: read (with LXX, Pesh., and most moderns) 'iniquity'—making a very slight change in the Hebrew.

fatness: i. e. grossness of heart: see xvii. 10.

8. Render: 'They give themselves to mocking and utter evil (things): From their (assumed) lofty place they utter wicked (*lit.* perverted: i. e. from the right) things.'

in wickedness: read evil (things).

oppression: translate, 'what is perverted'; so 'what is wicked,' following Aramaic usage.

they utter: they speak: in the Hebrew the same verb is used: it often means 'to speak inwardly,' 'to meditate,' 'scheme.'

9. The sense of the verse is: 'They blaspheme God, and go about in the earth slandering men.' So the ancient versions, Baethgen.

in the heavens: render: 'against God': the Hebrew preposition often means 'against'; 'heavens,' or rather 'heaven' (the Hebrew word is always pl.), means 'God,' as in Rabbinical Hebrew: cf. 'Heaven helps those who help themselves.'

10. If we retain the M. T. we must render: 'Therefore (as a result of their arrogant speech against God and man) their people (those subject to them, i. e. the Israelites), turn thither (to the wicked party, adopting their principles), and (in a dry land) water in full measure is drained by them.' But the text is obviously corrupt; making a few changes we obtain this rendering: 'Nevertheless they (= the wicked) have bread enough, and water in abundance is drained by them.'

The uncorrected Hebrew text (*keth.*) yields this rendering only: 'Therefore He will bring back' (or 'turn') 'His people hither' (or 'thither'): i. e. to Palestine.

And waters of a full *cup* are wrung out by them.
And they say, How doth God know? 11
And is there knowledge in the Most High?
Behold, these are the wicked; 12
And, being alway at ease, they increase in riches.
Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, 13
And washed my hands in innocency;
For all the day long have I been plagued, 14
And chastened every morning.

Therefore: read the similar Aramaic word for 'nevertheless.'

11. The speakers are those described in the foregoing verses, —the wicked.

How doth God know? better, 'how *can* God know?'

12-14. *The Psalmist is the speaker.* Formerly these verses were ascribed to faithless Israelites who had been induced to adopt the principles of their oppressors, an interpretation based on a wrong translation of verse 10, that based on the M. T.

12. these: i. e. 'such,' as in Job xviii. 21: cf. Ps. viii. 19; Isa. lxvi. 11. The wicked are such as have been described: they are prosperous though God-defiant.

13 f. The conclusion which the writer draws from the fact that the wicked prosper while the righteous are afflicted. It is to no purpose that the good life is lived, for the contrary life pays best. The fact that the writer or those he speaks for continued to walk in the good way proves that this way was regarded as the right one though it led to suffering; yet it reveals the belief of the time that even here and now virtue is rewarded. Jero. makes verses 13 f., as Luther verse 13, interrogative.

13. Surely: the Hebrew word has probably here, as it has in verse 1, its restrictive meaning 'only': 'It can issue only in nothing that I have cleansed,' &c.

have I cleansed my heart: i. e. purified my thoughts and feelings. In the Psychology of the Hebrews the heart is usually regarded as the seat of thought and feeling; cf. Prov. xx. 9.

And washed my hands in innocency: cf. Ps. xxvi. 6. There is a reference to the custom of washing the hands as a sign of being innocent, clean, with regard to some supposed guilt: see Deut. xxi. 6 f.; Matt. xxvii. 24. The Psalmist had kept himself free from both the thought and the act of sin.

14. plagued: visited by a Divine affliction: see on verse 5.

15 If I had said, I will speak thus;
Behold, I had dealt treacherously with the generation of thy children.
16 When I thought how I might know this,
It was too painful for me;
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God,
And considered their latter end.
18 Surely thou settest them in slippery places:
Thou castest them down to destruction.

15–28. *In the sanctuary the scales fall from his eyes. The mystery is at length solved. In the end it will be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked.*

15. Render: 'I said: I will speak such things: Behold, I have been (in saying that) false to the generation of my people.'

If I had said: the Hebrew word for 'if' is due to dittography, and must be omitted. He had said this.

'said': i.e. inwardly: so often in Hebrew.

16. Render: 'So I set about thinking as to how I might understand this (thing): (but the conclusion I came to was that the problem) was, in my estimation, weariness.'

When I thought: this translation assumes the change of one vowel in the Hebrew word, the conjunction being then changed from weak to strong *waw*. But the received text yields the excellent meaning 'So I began to think,' or, as above—'So I set about thinking,' &c.

too painful: Heb. 'it was wearying,' 'tiresome.' The original word is a noun (*'Āmāl*) used often in Eccles. for the toil that is dull, uninteresting, unprofitable, yet exhausting.

17. Until I went, &c.: rather, 'Until I entered,' &c. The ancient versions have the future owing to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew idiom.

the sanctuary of God. It was believed among the ancients that by sleeping in a temple the god of the place revealed secrets to the sleeper. See Isa. lxv. 4. Jehovah met the Psalmist in the temple, and opened his eyes to see His real purpose in regard to the wicked and the righteous.

their latter end: *lit.* 'what is after.' There is no thought here of the life beyond death.

18–20. *The fate of the wicked described.*

18. Surely: the Hebrew word may have the restrictive sense 'only,' as in verses 1, 13.

destruction: the Hebrew is plural of intensity, 'utter ruin.'

How are they become a desolation in a moment! 19
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
As a dream when one awaketh; 20
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.
For my heart was grieved, 21
And I was pricked in my reins:

The Hebrew word, which is peculiar, occurs also in lxxiv. 3. The meaning 'delusion,' though supported by Duhm and favoured by the M. T., does not suit the latter passage.

19. Render: 'How as in a moment are they undone' (*lit.* 'do they become a desolation')! 'They come to a full end through their dire calamities.'

20. Render: 'They shall be as a dream when one wakes: When Thou rousest Thyself Thou shalt despise their image.'

Lord: the Hebrew word is that read for Yahweh (Jehovah[1]). The latter was almost certainly the earlier word, and this again took the place of the almost identically spelt verb rendered above 'they shall be' (singular for plural).

To make the comparison perfect it should be said that the wicked perish when God rouses Himself, just as dreams vanish after waking.

when thou awakest: a different verb from the preceding one: render as above: 'When thou rousest thyself.' The same Hebrew letters mean also 'in the city' (i. e. Jerusalem or heaven), and in the LXX, Pesh., Jero. this is the rendering adopted. But parallelism and sense support the other rendering.

21 f. The Psalmist acknowledges his error, and rebukes himself for questioning the correctness of the Divine rule.

21 contains the protasis or condition of a compound sentence, verse 22 supplying the apodosis.

Render verse 21 f.: '21 When my heart (= I myself) was embittered, And I felt myself bitten at my reins, 22 Then was I stupid as a brute, having no knowledge: I was a downright beast towards thee.'

If with the R. V. we begin verse 21 with **For** and not 'when,' verses 21 f. must then be regarded as continuing the thought of the foregoing words: but in that case the connexion is a rather loose one.

was grieved: Heb. 'was soured' or 'embittered.'

pricked: the Hebrew verb is probably a denominative from

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[1] See on cviii. 3.

22 So brutish was I, and ignorant;
I was *as* a beast before thee.
23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
Thou hast holden my right hand.
24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.

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the noun = 'tooth.' 'I was toothed,' i. e. the pain I felt was comparable to that of being bitten.

reins (= kidneys): supposed to be the seat of the emotions: see Ps. vii. 9, xvi. 7; Job xix. 26; Prov. xxiii. 16.

22. ***as* a beast:** Heb. 'as a behemoth,' the word used in Job xl. 15 ff. for the hippopotamus, and until recently thought to be an Egyptian word. Here it is simply the plural of intensity of the ordinary Hebrew word for beast (usually a domestic beast, cattle, &c.). So 'a very beast' (Driver).

before thee: Delitzsch's rendering 'in comparison with thee' has no support in either Hebrew or in Arabic, notwithstanding his statements to the contrary.

23–26. True satisfaction is to be found in God. Having Him other things can be dispensed with. This is the true solution of the problem suggested by the prosperity of the wicked. They miss the best, the one thing needful and the only thing that is really indispensable.

23. To hold the right hand means to help in all plans and achievements: see xvi. 8.

24. guide: the same verb as in xxiii. 3, 'He leadeth me,' &c. 'Thou wilt lead (direct) me into thy plan' (for me), i. e. make me walk in the way devised for me by thee.

afterward: the Hebrew word is generally used as a prep., and Ewald and Hitzig so regard it here: 'Thou takest me after (= towards) honour.' But the adverbial sense is well supported in the O. T., see Gen. x. 18, xviii. 5, &c., and it gives the best sense and the best Hebrew here.

receive me to glory: the Hebrew word for 'receive' is used in the sense of taking along with, conducting towards some goal: see Gen. xlviii. 1; Exod. xii. 32, xiv. 6; Num. xxiii. 27, &c. Parallelism as well as the connexion favours this meaning here: see verses 23 f. 'Thou layest hold of my right hand: Thou guidest me into thy planned course of life, and, after thus guiding me, thou conductest me to honour.' In the end, at all events, the good man comes to his own, being honoured, and not, as before, despised.

There does not seem to be any allusion to the life beyond death

Whom have I in heaven *but thee*? 25
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth: 26
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: 27
Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
But it is good for me to draw near unto God: 28
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
That I may tell of all thy works.

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here or in xlix. 15, though the contrary is maintained by most expositors, Jewish and Christian.

25. *but thee*: render 'beside thee.' The Hebrew word so rendered must be restored, its omission being due to the double occurrence of the same word with only one letter in Hebrew between.

26. flesh and **heart** embrace the whole man, including the physical and the mental. The word heart is to be taken in the Kantian sense of 'mind,' embracing all mental power, emotional, intellectual, and volitional.

faileth: i. e. not come to an end, but become enfeebled, as of fading grass (Isa. xv. 6), of flesh (Job xxxiii. 21), of vital strength (Ps. lxxi. 11), of man's spirit (Ps. cxliii. 7).

the strength of my heart: rather, 'the rock of my heart' (of my inner being): what I myself stand securely on. Duhm expunges these words on the ground that in the previous clause the heart is supposed to have come to a complete end: but his inference rests on a wrong translation: see above.

my portion: cf. xvi. 5.

27 f. confirm what is stated on verse 26. The wicked perish. I find in Jehovah a refuge from all ills: He is my eternal portion.

27. they that are far, &c.: i. e. do not approach thee in worship: or have no fellowship with thee.

that go a whoring: faithlessness to Jehovah is conceived under the figure of harlotry, see cvi. 39; Exod. xxxiv. 15 f.; Deut. xxxi. 16; Hos. ii. 7, iv. 15; Isa. lvii. 3.

28. good: i. e. not in the moral sense, 'right,' 'proper': the word means here 'profitable.'

to draw near unto God: i. e. to worship Him as the true God: or perhaps union with God in the mystic sense is meant. For such mystical union the cognate Arabic word (*qurb*) is often used.

74 Maschil of Asaph.

1 O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever?

PSALM LXXIV.

Theme. A plaintive appeal to God to intervene on behalf of His people. They have been humbled: temple and synagogues have been destroyed: no prophet, no signs in the land. How long will Jehovah continue to allow this!

I. *Title.* A Maskil. An Asaph Psalm. On the word 'Maskil,' see vol. i. p. 16.

II. *Contents.* (1) God's help invoked on the ground of what He did for the nation in the past (verses 1–3).

(2) Description of the devastation of the temple by the heathen (verses 4–9).

(3) God's help once more invoked on the ground of what He is to the nation and of what He has done for it (verses 10–17).

(4) Prayer to be protected from shame and cruelty (verses 18–23).

The particularism in Pss. lxxiv and lxxix is striking. What the heathen have done against the Jewish nation they have done against God. In Ps. lxxiv it is the ruin of the sacred places—temple and synagogues—and the arresting of the outward religious life of the nation that form the chief burden of the complaint. In lxxix the suffering of the people is most prominent. But in both, all the heathen, i. e. all non-Israelites, are assumed to be the foes of God, and His vengeance is invoked on them.

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm to enable us to decide with confidence when or under what circumstances it was written. The general situation implied is clear enough. Heathen foes have invaded the land, laid Jerusalem in ruins, burnt the temple and all the synagogues of the country. The religious life of the nation is at a standstill. There are no prophets (verse 9), which shows that the destruction of the temple in B. C. 586 cannot have been the occasion of the Psalm: there were synagogues in the land (verse 8), which proves the Psalm post-exilic. Of many proposed dates the likeliest to suit Pss. lxxiv and lxxix is one during the Syrian persecutions in the second century B. C., though nothing positive can be said on the matter, since the nation passed through similar experiences many times: and, moreover, it is to be remembered that the Psalms were composed not merely, perhaps not chiefly, to express the feelings of any one time, but to voice the emotions of all times as prompted by reflection and actual experience. A poet's thoughts are often prompted and guided by events belonging to other times than his own.

Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased 2
of old,

Which thou hast redeemed to be the tribe of thine inheritance;

And mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

1–3. *God's help invoked.*

1. smoke: figuratively of the working of God's anger: so xviii. 18, lxxx. 4; Lam. ii. 3 f.

the sheep of thy pasture: i. e. the sheep shepherded or pastured by God: see lxxviii. 52, lxxix. 13, lxxx. 1, xcv. 7.

2. congregation. The Hebrew word (*'edah*) occurs in the O. T. 130 times, and is invariably translated in the LXX by the Greek form of synagogue, though 'synagogue' in the usual sense cannot be the meaning here. As opposed to the Hebrew term *gahal* it stands for a more general assembly of Israelites. In the P. Code it occurs frequently in the sense of gatherings of the people for worship, so agreeing with the Latin and English rendering 'Congregation.' It does not denote here, however, any single congregation, but the nation that is in the habit of congregating: i. e. the nation regarded as a church. This church conception of the nation was a growth of later times, and it was specially fostered by such persecutions as were carried on by the Syrians in the second century B. C. Persecution drives the persecuted together, and strengthens in them the feeling of unity.

which thou hast purchased: the reference is to the deliverance from Egypt. God by that act gained a right to the possession of Israel: see Exod. xix. 4 ff. The LXX, Jero. wrongly translate the verb 'possessed.' The original passage (Exod. xv. 16) and the parallelism support the R. V.

redeemed: the Heb. (*ga'al*) means to set free by paying a ransom or by providing a substitute. The other Hebrew word generally translated redeem (*padah*) refers primarily to the setting free of slaves. The same Greek word (*lutroō*) usually translates both Hebrew verbs, as also a third Hebrew verb found in cxxxvi. 24, rendered 'redeem' in the A. V.

tribe of thine inheritance: 'the tribe' (i. e. 'people') 'whom thou possessest.' The same Hebrew word means 'rod' or 'sceptre,' and also the tribe over which the sceptre-wielding chief rules. In the ancient versions and in the A. V. the former meaning is wrongly adopted.

mount Zion: the verb 'remember' is understood. The

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual ruins,
All the evil that the enemy hath done in the sanctuary.
4 Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of thine assembly;
They have set up their ensigns for signs.
5 They seemed as men that lifted up
Axes upon a thicket of trees.
6 And now all the carved work thereof together
They break down with hatchet and hammers.
7 They have set thy sanctuary on fire;

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rendering of the versions (except Jero.) 'this mount Zion' is excluded by the Hebrew. On mount Zion see additional note pp. 368 ff.

3. feet: read 'eyes,' varying the Hebrew slightly. The LXX has 'hands.'

ruins: better, 'utter ruin.' See on lxxiii. 18: cf. 1 Macc. iv. 38.

4–9. *Description of the Devastation of the Temple.*

4. roared: the temple courts resounded with the idle boasts of the conqueror instead of with the praises of God. LXX, Vulg. for **roared** have 'boasted.'

thine assembly: rather, 'thy temple': *lit.* 'thy meeting place.' See Lam. ii. 6.

their ensigns for signs: in Hebrew the same noun is used in both cases: 'they have set up their signs for ours.' It is the symbols or rites of Israel's religion that are referred to: Sabbath, sacrifice, phylacteries, &c. These were suppressed, and instead of them idolatrous rites introduced: see verse 9 and 1 Macc. i. 45–49, v. 49, and cf. Exod. xxxi. 13.

5 f. The enemy, in tearing down the carved work on walls and doors, resemble wood-cutters who are hewing down trees. The sanctuary is to the former no more sacred than common trees to the latter. The Hebrew text in these two verses is probably corrupt. If we retain the M. T. the following rendering seems best:

5. 'Each one' (of the foes) 'appears as one lifting up axes in a thicket of trees.'

6. 'And now they strike down with hatchet and hammers all its carved work.'

carved work: palm trees and open flowers were engraved on the temple walls (1 Kings vi. 29).

7–9. *Temple and Synagogues destroyed. Religious observances stopped.*

They have profaned the dwelling place of thy name even
to the ground.
They said in their heart, Let us make havoc of them 8
altogether:
They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.
We see not our signs: 9
There is no more any prophet;
Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.
How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach? 10
Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?
Why drawest thou back thy hand, even thy right hand? 11

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7. It is not said nor implied that the temple was wholly burnt down (as in 2 Kings xxv. 9 f.).

profaned . . . to the ground: lxxxix. 39 suggests the meaning: 'profaned it by levelling it with the ground.'

the dwelling place of thy name: i.e. which is called by thy name: cf. Deut. xii. 11.

8. Render: 'They say in their hearts, let us destroy them altogether: They have burnt all the meeting houses of God in the land.'

Let us make havoc: read (with Pesh., Duhm) 'Let us destroy' (verb *yagah*). Most Jewish and many Christian expositors read 'Let us oppress,' the verb in Ezek. xlv. 8 (*yanah*). The LXX, Jero. make a noun of the word: 'They said in their heart, (viz.) *all their kindred* (said).'

the synagogues: these institutions were probably established during the Exile, and in Palestine after the return. Down to the destruction of the temple in A. D. 71 the synagogue was merely a place of instruction (*beth midrash*).

9. signs: see on verse 4.

There is no more any prophet: a characteristic of the Maccabean age: see 1 Macc. iv. 46, ix. 27, xiv. 41.

Note that the function of the prophet here is that of a foreteller—one who can tell 'how long.' The O. T. prophet is usually rather a teacher and leader in religious things than a diviner—a 'forthteller.'

10–17. *Another appeal to God: how long?*

10. blaspheme: *lit.* 'contemn': 'despise.' The reproaching and the despising is not so much in words as in deeds.

11. Render: 'Why drawest thou back thy hand, and restrainest thy right hand in thy bosom?'

Pluck it out of thy bosom *and* consume *them.*

12 Yet God is my King of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength :
Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,

Pluck it : not in the Hebrew : nor should it be supplied in English.

out of (thy bosom) : change one consonant in the Hebrew (*m* to *b*) and render, 'in' (literally 'in the midst of').

consume : read (with a trivial change) 'restrain.'

12-17. *God's acts of deliverance in the past, a proof of what He is able to do.*

12. Render : 'Nevertheless thou, Jah, art our King from of old, Performing acts of deliverance in the earth.'

Yet God : in the following verses the second person is used, and, by making changes in the Hebrew that are not great, we obtain a text which yields : 'But' or 'Nevertheless thou Jah,' &c.

my King : better follow LXX, Vulg. and read 'our King.' It is the plural that is used in the context : cf. verse 9.

salvation : the word is plural in Hebrew, and denotes 'acts of deliverance' : 'deliverances.'

in the midst : Hebrew, and especially Aramaic, idiom for 'in.'

13 f. The allusion is to the ancient creation-myth preserved in Babylonian inscriptions. See 'Genesis' in this series p. 67 ff. There is nothing in this Psalm to indicate that the past history of Israel is in the writer's mind : cf. the historical Psalms lxxviii, cv f. We have an account of the creation in verse 15 ff., suggesting that what is described in verse 13 f. occurred before the creation.

13. Thou didst divide the sea : He cut in two the sea-monster : cf. what is said of Marduk and Tiamat. 'Sea' here, as in vii. 13, stands for sea-monster, the primaeval Chaos.

Thou brakest the heads of the dragons : the parallelism of sea and dragons shows that the sense is similar if not identical. Here the dragons are the offspring of the sea-monster.

14. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan : the sea-monster is represented as having seven heads. W. Robertson Smith thinks that the 'leviathan' of Scripture and the *tannin* of the Arabs is a personification of the waterspout (*Rel. Sem.*, 141). See cxlviii. 7.

Thou gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
Thou didst cleave fountain and flood: 15
Thou driedst up mighty rivers.
The day is thine, the night also is thine: 16
Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: 17
Thou hast made summer and winter.
Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, 18
And that a foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

the people inhabiting the wilderness: render: 'wild animals of the desert.'

There is a peculiar point in what is said here of Leviathan—God rescued the dry land from Leviathan after much fighting: and the flesh of the monster is cut up and given to wild animals that inhabited that very dry land which he battled his hardest to prevent from coming into being as such. What God did to the great enemy of the universe is pleaded as a reason why He should now come to the rescue of His people.

15. Render: '**Thou didst cleave** (cut a way for) fountains (collective) and winter torrents (wadies): Thou didst dry up perennial streams,' i. e. God lessened the area of the all-pervading primaeval ocean, causing the surplus water to bubble up in springs and to course between mountains as winter brooks.

16. The monster is killed: fountains and brooks flow. Next the creation of light is described.

thine: i. e. Thou art their creator.

the light and the sun: perhaps luminaries together with the sun: the lesser together with the greater. But probably we must drop the conjunction 'and' before sun: translating, 'the luminary' (or 'light bearer'), (i. e.) 'the sun.'

17. borders: what separates people from people, viz. mountains, deserts, seas, &c. Hardly (as Kirkpatrick thinks), the divisions of land and sea.

18–23. *Prayer to be protected from shame and cruelty.*

18. Render: 'Notwithstanding this' (the power thou hast displayed, see verses 13 ff.) 'the enemy has reproached (thee) O Jehovah, And a foolish people have shown contempt for thy name (= thy reputed character).

Remember this: read with a slight change 'Notwithstanding this.'

foolish (people): in the moral sense: see xiv. 7.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the wild beast:
Forget not the life of thy poor for ever.
20 Have respect unto the covenant:
For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of violence.
21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed:
Let the poor and needy praise thy name.
22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause:
Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee all the day.
23 Forget not the voice of thine adversaries:
The tumult of those that rise up against thee ascendeth continually.

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19. Render: 'Do not give over to wild beasts the soul of thy turtle-dove. Do not forget for ever thy afflicted ones.'

turtle-dove: an emblem of innocent helplessness.

the life: omit with LXX, Jero., Duhm. In Hebrew the same word means 'wild beast' and 'life.' This word is repeated by mistake from the rest of the verse. The result of the omission is shown in the rendering given above.

20. covenant: see Exod. xxiv. 8.

the dark places of the earth: rather, 'of the land': the secret hiding-places of the persecuted Israelites (1 Macc. i. 53, ii. 27-38).

the habitations of violence: i. e. spots in which violence dwells. Better, however, read 'haughtiness and violence,' the Hebrew being very much the same.

21. return: better, 'turn away,' 'turn from'—the radical meaning of the verb: 'Let not the oppressed turn back (from thee).'

ashamed: 'disappointed.' The Hebrew words for 'being ashamed' have this sense frequently.

the poor and needy: rather, 'the wretched' (or 'the afflicted') 'and poor.'

22. foolish: in the ethical sense as in verse 18.

23. ascendeth continually: Heb. 'keeps on ascending.' The Hebrew noun for 'whole burnt offering' has the same etymology as the verb translated 'ascendeth,' and this noun is often associated with the word translated 'continually': see Exod. xxix. 42; Num. xxviii (frequently). The phrase here has surely some reference to the sacrificial sense. 'The boisterous

For the Chief Musician ; *set to* Al-tashheth. 75
A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

We give thanks unto thee, O God ; 1
We give thanks, for thy name is near :
Men tell of thy wondrous works.

---

noise of thy foes is their daily offering—they present thee with no other.' Changing one Hebrew vowel we have the same expression exactly as in Num. xxviii. 3 ('a continual burnt offering.')

PSALM LXXV.

Theme. Acknowledgement of God's power and goodness in delivering His people.

I. *Title.* **For the Chief Musician:** see vol. i. p. 14. **Al-tashheth:** *lit.* 'do not destroy': the title of a harvest song (see Isa. lxv. 8), probably the two first words of this song : the present Psalm was to be sung to the melody of this song. See vol. i. p. 16.

Psalm: a lyric from the point of view of the music.

Song: a lyric from the point of view of the matter.

II. *Contents.* (1) The people express their gratitude to God for some deliverance (verse 1).

(2) God reminds the wicked that it will be ill with them and well with the righteous (verses 2–4).

(3) The Psalmist warns the same people, reminding them that there is no help except in God who humbles the proud and exalts the humble (verses 5–8).

(4) A promise to praise God who undertakes to abase the haughty (verses 9 f.).

The prayer for deliverance in Ps. lxxiv is suitably followed by two songs which celebrate deliverance granted.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm celebrates some national deliverance, but which one we have no means of ascertaining. Many (Ewald, &c.) refer this Psalm and the next to the deliverance from Assyria (2 Kings xix) : others say that it was some signal victory over Syria that called forth both Psalms.

1. The expression of thanks and praise.

Render : 'We give thanks unto thee, O God, We give thanks : and we call upon thy name : We recount thy wonderful acts.'

for thy name is near: read (with LXX, Pesh.) : 'We call upon Thy name' : the difference in the Hebrew is not great.

Men tell: read (with Pesh., Vulg.) : 'we recount' : LXX has 'I will recount.' The LXX and Vulg. very rarely differ in the Psalms.

This verse seems to imply that some extraordinary deliverance had been vouchsafed.

2 When I shall find the set time,
I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved:
I have set up the pillars of it. [Selah
4 I said unto the arrogant, Deal not arrogantly:
And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:
5 Lift not up your horn on high;
Speak not with a stiff neck.

2–4. *God, who is the speaker in these verses, warns the wicked of their latter end.*

2. When I shall find: better, 'whenever I take or choose.'

I will judge: better, 'I judge,' the verb including in it ruling as well as administering justice.

3. Render: 'Though the earth and its people be dissolved, I—I will assuredly set up aright its pillars.' Righteousness and the like are the pillars or supports for God's rule in the world. These will never give way, however unjust and defiant men may be.

I have set: render: 'I—I will certainly set,' &c. ('perf. of certainty').

4. Render:—

'I say to the fools, do not play the fool:
And to the wicked, toss not up (your) horn.'

arrogant: render: 'fools': see on lxxiii. 3.

Lift not up the horn: the same sense as our 'he holds his head high': the sense is, 'be not proud,' 'haughty.' The figure is taken from the habit of horned animals of tossing their horns in the air when under feeling analogous to human pride. The tossing of the horns is a sign of strength, and, when the words are applied to men, of victory as well as of pride, arrogance, &c. (see verse 10). The same figure is employed in verses 5, 10, and in lxxxix. 17, 24, xcii. 10, cxii. 9, clxviii. 14; 1 Sam. ii. 10. In Deut. xxxiii. 17 the phrase is used in the sense of attacking, goring.

5–8. *Words of warning by the Psalmist.*

5. Render: 'Lift not your horn against the Lofty one, Nor speak arrogantly against the Rock.'

on high: render: 'against the lofty one': *lit.* 'to the height,' the noun 'height' standing probably for God, as does 'heaven' in Rabbinical Hebrew. The parallel word in the next clause stands for God: see below, see xcii. 8.

Speak not with a stiff neck: better, if the M. T. is retained, 'Do not speak arrogantly with a (stiff) neck.' The adjective goes with the verb as in xxxi. 19, and means 'arrogantly.' The

For neither from the east, nor from the west, 6
Nor yet from the south, *cometh* lifting up.
But God is the judge: 7
He putteth down one, and lifteth up another.
For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the 8
wine foameth;
It is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same:
Surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall
wring them out, and drink them.
But I will declare for ever, 9
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

---

substantive neck means by itself a 'stiff neck' as in Job xv. 26 (R. V. 'stiff neck,' Heb. 'neck').

But the sense would be greatly improved if by making a trivial change in the Hebrew we read 'against the rock' for 'with a (stiff) neck.' This is implied in the LXX, which renders verse 5[b]: 'Speak not unrighteousness against God.' In this Greek version the Hebrew word for rock is translated 'God' whenever it stands for the Divine Being, e.g. xviii. 2, 46, xxviii. 1. There are but one or two exceptions: see on lxxviii. 35. Perhaps it was to avoid a name of God which might suggest image worship.

6 f. give the ground for the warning uttered in verse 5.

6. Render 6 f: 'For not from the east nor from the west Nor from the mountainous waste (comes redress), But God judges (redresses): He sets one down and raises another.'

lifting up: the Hebrew allows of this rendering, and also of the rendering 'of the mountains': the latter is what is intended here. 'The wilderness' (strictly, 'wild pasture land') 'of the mountains' = the mountainous waste of Judaea, i. e. the south. The Targ. add the north, assuming 'the wilderness' to be that of Syria.

8. Render: 'For a cup there is in the hand of Jehovah with foaming (or ruddy) wine full of mixed spices: And He pours out from it (the cup): Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain out.'

full of mixture: charged with spices that increase its intoxicating power.

9 f. *The Psalmist's promise to praise God.*

9. declare: better, 'exult': so LXX and parallelism. The Hebrew is much the same.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off;
But the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.

76 For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

1 In Judah is God known:
His name is great in Israel.
2 In Salem also is his tabernacle,
And his dwelling place in Zion.
3 There he brake the arrows of the bow;

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10. will I cut off. If we retain the M. T. the 'I' of this verse can only be the 'I' of the foregoing. 'I will glory in Jehovah, and with His strength I will cut short the pride of the wicked.' If, however, we change but one letter in the verb we get a more sensible rendering: 'He' ('Jehovah, in whom I exult,' &c.) 'will cut off,' &c.

PSALM LXXVI.

Theme. Jehovah has subdued His enemies and returns in triumph.

I. *Contents.* The course of thought in this Psalm is clear in the four strophes of which it is made up.

(1) God is known in Zion where He dwells (verses 1–3).

(2) God's glory is manifested in the discomfiture of Israel's foes (verses 4–6).

(3) Who can stand before God? (verses 7–9).

(4) It is the duty of Israel to praise Him (verses 10–12).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. lxxv.

1. known: Heb. (prob.) 'God is one who has made Himself known in Judah': i. e. in the victories won by the Jews over their adversaries: see xlviii. 3.

Israel is parallel with **Judah,** and means the same.

2. Salem: shortened form of Jerusalem, taken here from Gen. xiv. 18 (P): see also Heb. vii. 1 f. Since Gen. xiv. 18 is late, the present Psalm depending on it must be later.

tabernacle . . . dwelling stand here for the temple. The sanctuary in Jewish and other ancient religions was believed to afford protection against foes. The cities of refuge were originally sacred places. See Ps. xxvii. 3 f.

3. Render: 'He has broken the fiery shafts of the bow, the shield, and the sword: And He has made war (to cease).'

There. The Hebrew word is almost certainly a verb belonging to the preceding verse and meaning 'He set it' ('His

The shield, and the sword, and the battle. [Selah
Glorious art thou *and* excellent, from the mountains 4
of prey.
The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep; 5
And none of the men of might have found their hands.
At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, 6
Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

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dwelling'). No change in the consonantal text is required (*sh* and *s* are written alike in unpointed Hebrew).

arrows (of the bow). The Hebrew means 'flashes of lightning': from their swiftness arrows are thus termed. 'Fiery shafts' would keep up the figure without concealing the sense.

battle: better, 'war.' We must, according to the rhetorical figure called *anakolouthon*, supply with this noun the appropriate verb—here, 'to make cease.'

4-6. *God's glory manifested in the discomfiture of His enemies.*

4. Render: 'Terrible art thou and Majestic on the glorious eternal mountain.'

Glorious: read 'terrible,' rearranging the same letters: so Targ., Theod.

excellent: better, 'majestic.'

from the mountains of prey: for 'from' render 'on,' a common meaning of this preposition. 'Mountains' is the plural of majesty: render, 'glorious mountain.' Zion is obviously intended. For 'prey' read 'eternity,' rendering in the manner of Semitic as an adjective. One Hebrew word (*'ad*) means both 'eternity' and 'prey.' The present Hebrew word means 'prey' only, and is probably originally a scribal gloss substituted for the word glossed. So Hitzig. If the M. T. is kept unchanged Zion will be called the 'mountain of prey' because Israel's foes fell on it.

5. The stouthearted: cf. Isa. x. 12 ff.

sleep: the sleep of death is meant as in xiii. 4; Jer. li. 39, 57; Nahum iii. 18.

men of might: rather, 'courageous or brave men,' referring to the defeated warriors in the recent war, see cxviii. 15.

have found their hands: i. e. found strength to hold out in the battle. The word 'hands,' as the instruments of achievement, is often used for power, resource: see Joshua viii. 20; 2 Sam. iv. 1; cf. Deut. xxxvi. 36.

6. chariot and horse: used by metonymy for their riders: 'charioteers and horsemen' are meant.

cast into a deep sleep: the verb so rendered is often used of a supernaturally induced sleep: see Judges iv. 21; Dan. x. 9.

7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared:
And who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?
8 Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from heaven;
The earth feared, and was still,
9 When God arose to judgement,
To save all the meek of the earth. [Selah
10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:
The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee.
11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God:
Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him
that ought to be feared.

7–9. *Who can stand when God judges?*

7. Render: 'And thou—terrible art thou: who then can stand in front of thee, on account of the intensity of thy wrath?'

when once thou art angry: render as above, changing one vowel only in the Hebrew ('intensity' for 'anger').

8. Thou didst cause sentence: when God gave His people victory He pronounced sentence of condemnation upon the enemy: cf. xlvi. 6.

from heaven: Jehovah dwells in Zion (verses 2, 4), but His permanent and principal abiding place is heaven. We have a similar mixture of figures in lxviii. 17 f.–33 (in verse 17^b read: 'Jehovah is come from Sinai into the sanctuary'): see on cxxiii. 1.

10–12. *The duty of grateful homage to the all-delivering God.*

10. Render: 'Surely the wrath of man will praise thee: with the residue of great wrath thou wilt deck (gird) thyself,' i. e. the wrathful enemies of Zion will praise God when they see His power displayed, and Jehovah will get Himself glory by conquering those that remain rebellious.' But this is at once astray from the connexion and in itself improbable. Better read, making unimportant changes: 'All the tribes of mankind shall praise Thee: the residue of the tribes shall keep festival to thee.' So Ewald, &c.

residue: a technical term for the people who remain after God's final judgement has been executed.

11. Vow, and pay: render according to Hebrew idiom: 'If ye vowed (in the event of victory), then pay (your vows).'

the LORD your God: i. e. Jehovah your God. It is strange that the name Jehovah should be found in an Elohistic collection of Psalms.

round about him: i. e. in the neighbourhood of Zion.

He shall cut off the spirit of princes: 12
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

For the Chief Musician; after the manner of Jeduthun. 77
A Psalm of Asaph.

I will cry unto God with my voice; 1

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12. Render:—

'He will cut short the life of rulers.
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.'

spirit: it is the living principle that is meant. The Hebrew word rendered 'soul' (*nephesh*) means the life actually lived with its outward manifestations. With the Hebrew words for 'spirit' and 'soul' may be compared the Greek words *zoe* and *bios*. The two Hebrew words referred to are never spoken of as distinct parts of man, but only as two sides of the same inner life. The O. T. does not teach the doctrine of three natures in man (body, soul, and spirit), even if the N. T. does, which is doubtful: see Schmiedel and von Soden on the N. T. passages (1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. iv. 12).

Psalm LXXVII.

Theme. A wail of sorrow. God's wonderful dealings with His people in the past, a source of confidence for the present and future.

I. *Title.* **after the manner of Jeduthun**: i. e. to be sung to a melody called Jeduthun or (less likely) a melody composed by Jeduthun. The name Jeduthun occurs in the O. T. also in the form Jedethun. Both these names stand for the person called elsewhere Ethan[1]. See on *Asaph Psalms*, p. 37 f.

II. *Contents.*

(1) The Psalmist's intense anguish: no relief is felt from prayer or from a contemplation of the Divine goodness in the past (verses 1–10).

(2) In contradiction to his present sad lot, forgotten of God as he seems to be, he recalls the miracles of mercy wrought by God on behalf of His people in the past (verses 11–20).

Probably the close of the Psalm, expressing the writer's faith in God and the future, has fallen out.

III. *Authorship and Date.* It is impossible to decide with certainty when or under what circumstances the composition of this Psalm took place, though that it implies a time of great distress is beyond question: but times of that kind occurred often in the nation's history.

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[1] See 1 Chron. xv. 17.

Even unto God with my voice, and he will give ear
unto me.
2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord:
My hand was stretched out in the night, and slacked not;
My soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remember God, and am disquieted:
I complain, and my spirit is overwhelmed. [Selah
4 Thou holdest mine eyes watching:
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

1-10. *The Psalmist's intense anguish.*

1. Render:—

'My voice is towards God:
And I will cry loudly unto God,
So that He may give ear unto me.'

with my voice: i. e. 'loudly,' according to Hebrew idiom.

2. My hand was stretched out: i. e. in prayer. The Hebrew verb, however, means 'to pour forth': passive, 'to be poured forth.'

For 'My hand,' read with Targ., 'My eye,' and render: 'My eye was poured out' (in tears), &c.: agreeing closely with Lam. iii. 49.

3. Render: 'When I would remember God, I was disquieted: When I would muse in prayer, my spirit fainted.'

my spirit: i. e. 'I myself,' as 'my soul' in the foregoing verse.

is overwhelmed: *lit.* 'is covered over,' as if crushed by a superincumbent load; see cvii. 5, cxlii. 4, cxliii. 4: cf. lxi. 3.

4. Render: 'When thou layest hold of my eyelids
I become restless, not being able to speak.'

holdest: i. e. to hold (open) the eyelids is to prevent them from closing in sleep.

mine eyes watching: Heb. 'the guards of my eyes,' i. e. 'my eyelids.'

troubled: the verb occurs also in Gen. xli. 8; Dan. ii. 3, and means 'to be struck,' 'tossed,' or 'beaten about.'

5. Render: 'I meditated much (or, I pictured) the days of old, the years of long ago.'

His eyes were kept open: no sleep came to them: thought was stirred up and he recalled times when things went better with him. The same feeling has been often expressed. Cf.:—

'No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand.'

Dante, *Inferno*, v. 1. 18 f.

I have considered the days of old, 5
The years of ancient times.
I call to remembrance my song in the night: 6
I commune with mine own heart;
And my spirit made diligent search.
Will the Lord cast off for ever? 7
And will he be favourable no more?
Is his mercy clean gone for ever? 8
Doth his promise fail for evermore?

'For of Fortune's sharp adversite
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man to have been in prosperite,
And it remember when it passid is.'
Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida*, Book III.

'A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.'
Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*.

the days of old and the **years of ancient times** in the parallel clauses stand for the same thing.

The word translated **I have considered** may mean 'I pictured,' 'made an image of before my mind.'

6. my song in the night: now in my sorrow I call to mind the song of praise I used to sing for the joy experienced in the day. See Job xxxv. 10.

'song': *lit.* 'a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument,' then a song of any kind: cf. the generalized meaning of lyric, and of the Heb. word (*mizmor*) for 'Psalm[1].'

I commune, &c. This verb has the same strongly subjective form as the preceding one. 'I cannot restrain myself from murmuring to myself the night songs of better times.' The verb means not merely to think or meditate about, but also 'to utter in a low tone.' Nothing makes past pleasure more real in thought than the experience of sorrow.

my spirit (='I myself') **made diligent search**: i. e. my thoughts wander in all directions. Better, however, with Wellhausen, make a slight change, and read 'my spirit' (= I myself) 'suffered anguish.'

7–9. *Will God never more be well-disposed, kind and gracious, as He used to be?*

7. cast off: the word in xliv. 10, lxxiv. 1.

8. promise: read 'faithfulness' with Nestle. The Hebrew word used here never means 'promise.'

[1] But see p. 4.

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? [Selah
10 And I said, This is my infirmity;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the
Most High.
11 I will make mention of the deeds of the LORD;
For I will remember thy wonders of old.
12 I will meditate also upon all thy work,
And muse on thy doings.
13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary:
Who is a great god like unto God?
14 Thou art the God that doest wonders:
Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples.
15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. [Selah

10. Render: 'Then I said: this is my wound' (or 'sickness' or 'trouble')—'that the right hand of the Most High has changed.'

What causes the Psalmist to feel wounded at heart, sorrow-smitten, is the thought that the ancient power of Jehovah has left him. The following verses referring to God's gracious doings in the past support this interpretation. So the Targ. and the Greek and Latin versions.

the years of the right hand: the Hebrew can yield this meaning or that given above, which is far preferable.

11–15 and 20 contain a survey of God's gracious dealings with Israel in the past. There is no need to regard this section as a fragment of another poem, though 16–19 is clearly that.

13. Render: 'Thy way, O God, is holy (i. e. faithful): Who is a God great like our God?'

Thy way: i. e. thy mode of acting towards thy people.

is in the sanctuary: better, 'is holy'; so Targ., Pesh.: the 'in' ('*beth essentiae*') is not to be translated, and the noun is to be construed as an adjective—both according to Hebrew idiom.

like unto God: for 'God' read 'our God' with the LXX, Pesh.

14. the God: read 'a God': the definite article is due to dittography.

15. redeemed: on the Hebrew verb (*ga'al*) see on lxxiv. 2.

The sons of Jacob and Joseph: i. e. the sons of Jacob, not omitting those of Ephraim and Manasseh the sons of Joseph.

The waters saw thee, O God ; 16
The waters saw thee, they were afraid :
The depths also trembled.
The clouds poured out water ; 17
The skies sent out a sound :
Thine arrows also went abroad.
The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind ; 18
The lightnings lightened the world :
The earth trembled and shook.
Thy way was in the sea, 19

The addition is intended to make it clear that the Northern Kingdom is embraced as well as the Southern—the whole nation.

16–19. *God's sovereignty displayed in the storm.* In this section we are suddenly transported from the realm of history to that of nature, verse 20 continuing the historical survey dropped at verse 15. It is quite evident that verses 16–19 are an interpolation. Their metrical structure is also different from that of the rest of the Psalm. The language is borrowed from the creation-myth : see on lxxiv. 13 ff. There is no reference to the passage of the Red Sea.

16. they were afraid : Heb. 'they were in pangs,' 'writhing in pain,' as a mother in childbirth.

The depths : a reference to the primaeval abyss of Babylonian mythology. When the hostile Tiamat beheld God it fell into convulsions of pain, for it knew itself in the presence of one who had supreme power.

17–20. Cf. Hab. iii.

17. Besides the tempestuous waters below, the waters above were also in commotion, and poured forth showers of rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. See cxiv. 3 ; Exod. xv. 5, 8 ; and especially Hab. iii. 10.

Thine arrows : i. e. flashes of lightning : see verse 18 ; cf. Hab. iii. 11.

18. The voice, &c. : better, 'Hark ! thy thunder,' &c.

whirlwind : *lit.* 'what goes round.' See on lxxxiii. 14. Many other renderings have been proposed.

19. Render : 'Thy way was upon the sea, And thy paths were upon great waters, And thy footprints could not be traced.'

the sea : i. e. the sea-monster, the Tiamat. See on lxxiv. 13 ff. : 'Thou didst tread on the abysmal waters in token of Thy sovereignty.'

And thy paths in the great waters,
And thy footsteps were not known.
20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

78 Maschil of Asaph.

1 Give ear, O my people, to my law:

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thy paths: the Jewish editors (Massorites) follow the Targ. and correct the text, reading the singular 'path': so Jero. The plural is better and is better attested.

were not known: rather, 'were unknowable,' though the Hebrew admits of both renderings. In His triumphant march God moves so quickly that the way He goes cannot be traced.

20. This verse continues the historical retrospect, interrupted by verses 16–19.

Thou leddest, &c.: cf. Exod. xv. 13.

By the hand of Moses and Aaron: taken apparently from Num. xxxiii. 1; cf. Mic. vi. 4. God acted as guide, but the guidance was through Moses and Aaron.

With the exception of this passage, neither Moses nor Aaron is mentioned in the Psalter outside Books IV and V.

Psalm LXXVIII.

Theme: Lessons of warning drawn from God's treatment of the nation in the past.

I. *Contents.* This is the longest and one of the finest of the historical Psalms. The arrangement is according to Chronology, so that a logical analysis is almost impossible.

The general course of thought may be thus set out:—

(1) Exhortation to give heed to what the fathers have taught about God's doings to His people (verses 1-8).

(2) The marvels wrought by God at the Exodus from Egypt and during the journeying in the wilderness. The unbelief of the people (verses 9-31).

(3) God's punishment of the people for their sin. His pity. Their repeated unbelief and apostasy (verses 32-58).

(4) Israel's idolatry in Canaan, and its penalty (verses 59-66).

(5) God's choice of Judah instead of Ephraim (verses 67-72).

The purpose of the writer seems to be to warn the nation against apostasy.

The reference to the Northern Kingdom adds emphasis to the warning. God had cast off Ephraim on account of their disloyalty

Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old: 2

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to the Divine King. Judah must expect the same punishment if the same sin is persisted in.

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is no decisive evidence for forming a judgement as to the time when the Psalm was written. The following are the principal considerations bearing on the question :—

(1) The revolt of the ten tribes had taken place; it belonged to the far-off events of the national history, and could be referred to for didactic purposes, verses 67 ff.

(2) The didactic treatment of history, though traceable in the older prophets (Amos, &c.), was not developed to the extent seen in this Psalm until the promulgation of the Deuteronomic code (about B. C. 620). This Psalm links itself on to the historical Psalms cv-cvii, and perhaps they are all products of the same time and circumstances.

(3) The Divine name, 'The Holy One of Israel,' is derived from the Trisagion (Isa. vi. 3), and in both parts of Isaiah it occurs frequently. This would seem to show that the Psalm is not older than Isaiah's age: see on verse 4.

(4) In his account of the plagues in Egypt the writer shows no acquaintance with any Pentateuchal source except J (the Jahwist) or perhaps JE (the Jehovist). Of the Priestly code he seems to know nothing. The Psalm was therefore written either before the Exile or soon after the Exile began. More than this cannot be said, but with this all the other considerations agree.

1–8. *Introduction to the Psalm.*

1–4. *The Psalmist invokes the attention of his readers to what he is about to say.*

1. See xlix. 2; Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2.

my law: rather, 'my teaching'; parallel to 'the words of my mouth.' The Hebrew word (*torah*) means 'teaching,' and it stands in the O. T. for God's will as revealed through His servants, prophets, priests; &c. In Rabbinical Hebrew it is the technical term for the Pentateuch. Our rendering 'law' is due to the word *nomos* in the LXX, the Greek word being suggested probably by Rabbinical usage. See Introduction to Ps. cxix.

2. I will open: the Hebrew expresses a strong wish or resolve: so also does the next verb.

in a parable: read with the versions, 'in parables'; i.e. 'short instructive sayings': cf. the parallel, 'dark sayings.'

I will utter: *lit.* 'I will pour forth.'

3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And his strength, and his wondrous works that he hath done.
5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which he commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children:

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dark sayings: the word means strictly 'an enigma,' 'a riddle'; see Judges xiv. 12 f.; 1 Kings x. 1.

In xlix. 4 the same two nouns—'parable,' 'dark sayings'—are brought together, both of them in this instance in the singular.

3. Verse 2 should have only a comma and not a colon at the end of it, since verse 3 contains relative clauses describing the 'parables' and 'dark sayings.'

Render verse 3: 'which (i. e. the 'parables' and 'dark sayings') we have heard and known' (i. e. understood, though obscure), &c.

4. Render: 'They were not hidden from their children who, to another generation, recounted the praiseworthy acts of Jehovah and His might and His wonderful deeds which He performed.'

We will not hide: read with LXX, Jero.: 'They were not hidden'; no change in the Hebrew consonants is required. Otherwise we must read '*our* children' for '*their* children,' and supply the object of the verb from verse 3, 'which we have heard,' &c.

to the generation to come: each generation recounting to the succeeding one.

the praises: i. e. the praiseworthy acts: cf. xxii. 3, 30 f.

wondrous works: the Hebrew term (one word) is used for outstanding acts of God whether in nature or in the delivering of His people.

5–8 *give the ground of the exhortation in* 1–4.

5. testimony: what God testified; what He solemnly declared as His desire.

law: see on verse 1.

'Testimony' and 'law' stand for one thing, i. e. the command in Deut. iv. 9, the substance of which is given in the remainder of the verse. See Introduction to Ps. cxix.

Which: render 'Whereby.'

That the generation to come might know *them*, even the 6
children which should be born;
Who should arise and tell *them* to their children:
That they might set their hope in God, 7
And not forget the works of God,
But keep his commandments:
And might not be as their fathers, 8
A stubborn and rebellious generation;
A generation that set not their heart aright,
And whose spirit was not stedfast with God.
The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, 9
Turned back in the day of battle.
They kept not the covenant of God, 10
And refused to walk in his law;

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6. Render: 'In order that another generation might get to know, And that they [children yet to be born] might arise and recount them to their children.' The words in brackets are probably a margin gloss on 'another generation,' which, in the original, they immediately follow.

7. their hope: rather, 'their trust' 'or confidence,' as in Prov. iii. 16.

8. stubborn and rebellious: the same combination of adjectives in Deut. xxi. 18: cf. Deut. xxxii. 5.

stedfast: Heb. 'faithful.'

heart and **spirit** are simply strong forms of the personal pronouns.

9-16. *The marvels wrought by God at the Exodus and in the wilderness.*

9. This verse is rejected by most recent commentators. Its Hebrew is bad, its sense unsuitable, and it interrupts the connexion of verses 8 and 10.

If the verse be retained one Hebrew word (=**carrying**) must be omitted as merely a gloss on the other (=**armed**); render then: 'The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned about (and fled) in the day of battle.' The Hebrew words for 'armed with the bow' occur in 1 Chron. xii. 2; 2 Chron. xvii. 17, and, except also in this verse, nowhere else.

children of Ephraim: i. e. Ephraimites.

10. What is said here and in the following verses is as true of

11 And they forgat his doings,
And his wondrous works that he had shewed them.
12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
13 He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through;
And he made the waters to stand as an heap.
14 In the day-time also he led them with a cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
15 He clave rocks in the wilderness,
And gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths.
16 He brought streams also out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

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the Judahites as of the Ephraimites—strong ground surely for uniting the verse immediately with verse 8.

12. Here there is a brief reference to the plagues, but the poet speaks of them with greater fullness in verses 43 ff. In the next verse he passes on to the Exodus.

field (of Zoan): translate 'district': the word rendered **field** means also 'territory,' 'district.'

'Zoan' is the Greek Tanis on the east bank of the Tanaitic branch of the Nile. It is regarded as the capital of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

13. He clave the sea: see Exod. xiv. 16; Isa. lxiii. 12, where the same word occurs.

as an heap: see xxxiii. 7 and Exod. xv. 8.

14. See Exod. xiii. 21.

15. He clave: Probably we are to carry forward the force of the conjunction 'and' (*waw consec.*) from verse 14, translating simply 'And He clave.' Otherwise the sense of the Hebrew verb (imperf.) implies a repetition of the occurrence: 'He used to cleave,' &c. There are two recorded instances of the people murmuring and of water being given them—in the one case from a rock (Exod. xvii. 1-7, JE or J), in the other from a 'Crag' (Num. xx. 2-13: P [partly JE]).

Both events occurred at the same place, for Rephidim and Kadesh are not locally different: see Num. xx. 1, 15. Have we two traditions of the same event?

abundantly: read for the peculiar Hebrew word here 'desert,' prefixing one letter: translate then: 'And gave them drink out of the depths of the desert.' So Graetz.

16. rock: rather, 'crag.'

Yet went they on still to sin against him, 17
To rebel against the Most High in the desert.
And they tempted God in their heart 18
By asking meat for their lust.
Yea, they spake against God; 19
They said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?
Behold, he smote the rock, that waters gushed out, 20
And streams overflowed;
Can he give bread also?
Will he provide flesh for his people?

17-31. *Israel's unbelief in the wilderness and its punishment.* The account is given in a rhetorical form, and does not accord exactly with any one O. T. narrative. It is based for the most part on Num. xi, but Exod. xvi seems largely drawn upon, and in the close of verse 26 ('guided on' &c.) there appears to be dependence on Exod. x. 13 (JE). For details see the Exegesis. It is an interesting and significant fact that though Exod. xvi belongs almost entirely to P, the parts made use of in this Psalm are such as do not belong to P.

17. Yet went they on, &c. A common formula in Judges. Hupfeld calls attention to the recurrence of 'rebel' and 'tempt' at the beginning of new sections of the Psalm (verses 17 f., 40 f., 56).

18. meat: rather, 'food.' In Old English 'meat' included all kinds of food except bread and drink.

for their lust: rather, 'for themselves.' The same Hebrew word = (1) desire, (2) soul, (3) self as an emphatic pronoun. In lxxxviii. 14 'my soul' and 'me' are in parallelism.

19. Can God, &c. Though this question is not recorded elsewhere it embodies an attitude of mind which was amply displayed.

prepare a table: cf. xxiii. 5.

20. rock: the word used in Exod. xvii. 6, but no doubt the parallel incident recorded in Num. xx. 8 ff. is also in the writer's mind.

bread: the word occurs in Exod. xvi. 8 for the food eaten in Egypt, and in Exod. xvi. 12 for the manna of the wilderness. The latter, however, belongs to the P document: perhaps here P is dependent on an older source. If not, this verse at least is post-exilic, or at earliest exilic.

flesh: quails are so described in Exod. xvi. 12 and in Num. xi. 5, 13.

This verse seems to take for granted that the water out of the rock was given before the manna and the quails: but in both Exod. and Num. the contrary is the order followed. Thus manna

21 Therefore the LORD heard, and was wroth:
And a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also went up against Israel;
22 Because they believed not in God,
And trusted not in his salvation.
23 Yet he commanded the skies above,
And opened the doors of heaven;
24 And he rained down manna upon them to eat,
And gave them of the corn of heaven.
25 Man did eat the bread of the mighty:

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and quails Exod. xvi and Num. xi, water Exod. xvii. 1–6 and Num. xx. 8 ff.

21. Therefore the LORD heard, &c.: render: 'Therefore when Jehovah heard he was enraged.'

a fire, &c., referring to Num. xi. 1 ff.

went up: here of anger, as also in xviii. 8, where anger is spoken of under the figure of smoke. Cf. lxxiv. 1.

22. in his salvation: in His power and willingness to deliver them from thirst and hunger.

23–25. *Notwithstanding their unbelief God gave them manna.*

23. opened the doors, &c. See Introduction to civ, 'Cosmology,' &c.

24. Cf. Exod. xvi. 4: 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.'

manna: the etymology of the word given in Exod. xvi. 15 ('what is it') is a popular one, but it is not correct, as a knowledge of Hebrew shows. 'Manna' among the Beduin Arabs of the Sinaitic Peninsula denotes those thick drops of sweet substance which for six weeks in May and June exudes from the branches of trees of the Tarfu or Tamarisk kind. These drops fall thickly on the ground on warm evenings and become hard in the coolness of the night, melting under the influence of the morning sun. When gathered they resemble small white marbles, and they are considered a great luxury, though they are not eaten as food. Here, as in Exod. xvi and John vi. 31, the manna is regarded as a special gift from God; and something in the circumstances may have made the supply miraculous.

corn of heaven: according to several ancient and modern commentators the manna is so called on account of its granular shape: see Exod. xvi. 31.

25. Man: rather, 'every one.' The Hebrew word here (*ish*) has often this sense: cf. Exod. xvi. 18, 21.

He sent them meat to the full.
He caused the east wind to blow in the heaven: 26
And by his power he guided the south wind.
He rained flesh also upon them as the dust, 27
And winged fowl as the sand of the seas:
And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, 28
Round about their habitations.
So they did eat, and were well filled; 29
And he gave them that they lusted after.
They were not estranged from their lust, 30
Their meat was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them, 31

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bread of the mighty: render with LXX and Pesh.: 'bread of angels'; cf. Targ., 'bread from the dwelling of angels.' For **mighty** as an epithetic of angels see ciii. 3 and Wisdom xvi. 20. According to Jewish mythology angels feed on manna.

meat: rather, 'provision': food consisting of either cooked fish or cooked flesh: *lit.* 'what has been caught by hunting or fishing.' Here probably we are to understand the quails in contrast with the bread (='manna') of the previous clause.

26–28 *describe the coming of the quails.* In this account the quails are sent immediately after the manna, as in Exod. xvi. In Numbers quails are given because the people are tired of the manna. In the former the manna is most important, in the latter it is of less importance than the quails. It is the language of Num. xi that is most drawn upon here.

26. The verbs in verse 26 are identical with those found in verse 52: **east wind** and **south wind** really mean the south-east wind, that which blows from Arabia. The terms 'east' and 'south' are named separately owing to the exigency of the poetry. It is the Sirocco that is meant.

27. flesh and **winged fowl:** i. e. quails: see Exod. xvi. 13 and Num. xi. 31.

28. habitations: the noun here found is that used for the (P) Tabernacle of the wilderness.

30. estranged: cf. Num. xi. 20, where the cognate noun ('loathsome thing') occurs.

their lust: i. e. what they lusted after.

meat: see on verse 18.

31. See Num. xi. 33.

And slew of the fattest of them,
And smote down the young men of Israel.
32 For all this they sinned still,
And believed not in his wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
And their years in terror.
34 When he slew them, then they inquired after him:
And they returned and sought God early.
35 And they remembered that God was their rock,
And the Most High God their redeemer.
36 But they flattered him with their mouth,
And lied unto him with their tongue.
37 For their heart was not right with him,
Neither were they faithful in his covenant.

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the fattest: i. e. the strongest.

smote down: rather, 'bowed down': 'laid low.' Even young men were bowed down as though with the weight of years.

32–58. *The people continue in their unbelief. God punishes them, yet relents, and performs great marvels, though they are still unbelieving.*

32–37. *Notwithstanding what God had done for them, the people sinned more and more.*

32. For all this: i. e. 'Notwithstanding all this.'

33. in vanity: *lit.* 'in a breath.' He made their life end in nothing.

34. returned and sought God early: render: 'They sought God once more.' The first verb qualifies the second adverbially, and the second verb means simply 'to seek,' and not to 'seek early,' nor to 'seek diligently.' It is this verb that occurs in Prov. viii. 17.

35. their rock: LXX 'their Helper': see on lxxv. 5. 'Helper' is substituted in the LXX for 'God,' because the latter word occurs already in the verse: see on lxxv. 5.

redeemer: for the sense of the Hebrew word (*go'el*) see on lxxiv. 2.

36. flattered: Heb. 'deceived,' 'beguiled.' They acted as if they could deceive Him: so 'they lied,' &c. Cf. Isa. xxix. 13.

37. right: the Hebrew word is cognate with the verb, rendered 'set . . . aright,' in verse 8, and must be explained in a similar way: it denotes the contrary of being unfaithful.

But he, being full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, 38
and destroyed *them* not:
Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,
And did not stir up all his wrath.
And he remembered that they were but flesh; 39
A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
How oft did they rebel against him in the wilderness, 40
And grieve him in the desert!
And they turned again and tempted God, 41
And provoked the Holy One of Israel.
They remembered not his hand, 42
Nor the day when he redeemed them from the adversary.
How he set his signs in Egypt, 43

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38 f. The Divine compassion.

38. forgave *their* iniquity: Heb. 'repeatedly forgave their iniquity'; the other verbs in this verse have also the frequentative sense. The Hebrew can be translated by the present tense, and many moderns so render, but that is to cut off the verse from its connexion.

many a time turned he his anger away: the Hebrew is still stronger, 'He was wont to turn away His anger abundantly': *lit.* 'He was wont to abound in turning away His anger.'

39. God pitied man because his life is a short one.

40-43. *The people's rebellion in the wilderness:* verses 40 f. differ from verses 17 f. in language only.

40. rebel against (or 'defy') and 'grieve' are found together in Isa. lxiii. 10.

41. they turned again: rather, 'they tempted God once more.'
provoked: better, 'pained.'

the Holy One of Israel: i. e. the Holy One who is the God of Israel. The adjective 'Holy' (One) came to be a name of God, so that Holy One of Israel = God of Israel. The expression originated with Isaiah (see Isa. vi. 3), and it occurs in no writings earlier than his. Perhaps, as Marti, A. B. Davidson, and others suggest, it is equivalent to 'transcendent'; 'the Transcendent One of Israel': only it must be borne in mind that the transcendence implied is moral.

42. his hand: i. e. His powerful acts on their behalf: cf. 'powerful hand,' Exod. iii. 19, vi. 1.

43 begins a long relative sentence which seems to extend

And his wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 And turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink.
45 He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them;
And frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller,
And their labour unto the locust.

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to the end of verse 55. Perhaps the 'two' (or 'who') belongs to verses 43 f. only, so the E.VV.

43. See Exod. x. 1 f. : cf. Ps. cv. 27.

In verses 44–51 we have an enumeration of the plagues, but only such as are recorded in the Pentateuchal source called the 'Jahwist' (Yahwist, J) (or the Jehovist, JE : see Introduction to this Psalm). Of the ten plagues seven[1] are here referred to, the plagues of lice, boils (P), and darkness (E) not being named at all. It looks therefore much as if the Jahwist document was alone known to the writer : our Pentateuch could not then have existed, an important fact in deciding the date of the Psalm, and in its bearing on the date and authorship of the Pentateuch itself. The order in which they are referred to agrees with that of Exodus in the case of the first and last only. Perhaps the Psalmist does no more than draw upon his memory without aiming at literal accuracy, or he may follow some principle of arrangement that is not obvious to us.

44. The first plague : see Exod. vii. 17–25, and cf. Ps. cv. 29.

rivers : the Hebrew word in the singular means the Nile, and in the plural the Nile and its canals.

45. Fourth and second plagues.

swarms of flies : render, 'dogflies' : so LXX, and most moderns. The Hebrew has but one word, and it occurs only here, in Exod. viii. 20–32, and in cv. 31, in each case in reference to this fourth plague. Its etymology is uncertain, but Jewish expositors say the word = 'a mixture' (of vermin).

frogs : see Exod. viii. 1–15 : cf. cv. 30.

46. The eighth plague : Exod. x. 1–20 : cf. Ps. cv. 34.

their increase : what the land yielded : the harvest of the land (lxvii. 6).

caterpiller : the word so rendered is not in Exodus : it is but another name for locust, brought in for the parallelism. Cf. Joel i. 4, ii. 25, where other names occur.

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[1] Obtained by altering the text of verse 48 : otherwise six and not seven plagues are referred to ; see on that verse.

He destroyed their vines with hail, 47
And their sycomore trees with frost.
He gave over their cattle also to the hail, 48
And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.
He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, 49
Wrath, and indignation, and trouble,

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47. The seventh plague. Exod. ix. 13–34 : cf. Ps. cv. 33.

vines : sycomores : on the Egyptian paintings grapes and figs are often found. Sycomore wood was largely used in the making of mummy cases.

frost : the Hebrew word occurs here only, and it cannot be explained from the cognates. Something which, like hail, could destroy the trees is meant. Though most of the versions take 'frost' to be the meaning, the parallelism and sense favour the rendering of the R.V. marg., 'great hail-stones.'

48. Fifth plague : that of murrain of beasts, Exod. ix. 17. Render : 'And He gave over their beasts to the murrain, And their cattle to burning fevers.'

cattle : domestic animals in general are meant, as in Exod. xxii. 4 ; Num. xx. 4, 8, 11 ; *lit.* 'beasts of burden,' as in Gen. xlv. 17 : cf. xliv. 3, 13.

hail : read as in Exod. ix. 3, 'murrain' : so Sym., two Hebrew MSS., and many moderns : 'hail' is mentioned in verse 47. The Hebrew consonants are the same in both words, only they are differently arranged. We thus get a reference to a fifth plague.

flocks : *lit.* 'possessions' : then domestic animals in general, horses, asses, oxen, &c. : the word has here the same sense exactly as 'cattle,' parallelism requiring another word, otherwise the same word would have been repeated.

thunderbolts : render, 'pestilences' : it is simply another word for 'murrain.'

Duhm thinks verses 49 f. an interpolation, having no reference originally to the Egyptian plagues. But external evidence is wholly against him, and as regards internal evidence, that is often a matter of feeling and even of temperament.

49. The tenth plague, verses 49–51.

It is probable that verses 49 f. are intended to lead up to verse 51. The 'letting loose of His anger' and the 'making of a level road for His anger' were all in order that He might inflict upon the Egyptians the severest of all the plagues.

Render : 'He let loose against them the heat of His anger, Wrath, fury, and distress, Letting loose (these) evil messengers.'

A band of angels of evil.
50 He made a path for his anger;
He spared not their soul from death,
But gave their life over to the pestilence;
51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt,
The chief of their strength in the tents of Ham:
52 But he led forth his own people like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
53 And he led them safely, so that they feared not:
But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,

A band: read the participle 'sending,' changing the vowels and omitting the last consonant, which closely resembles the preceding one and was added in error. The word in the M.T. is generally translated 'a sending,' or 'a mission': it occurs besides in Eccles. viii. 8 only.

angels of evil: better, 'evil messengers,' i. e. His anger, wrath, &c. They are, however, called evil because they bring evil.

50. made a path: *lit.* 'levelled a path': made a level road: i.e. He removed restraints to His anger, giving it full play.

pestilence: the word used in Exod. ix. 7 of the murrain of beasts: see on verse 48.

51. The chief of their strength: *lit.* 'the firstling of manly strengths': i. e. according to a common Hebrew idiom 'the firstlings of manly strength.'

Ham is not here a personal name. See Gen. x. 6. It is simply a parallel name for Egypt: see on cv. 23.

In verses 52–55 we have a summary account of God's guidance of Israel in the wilderness until they reached the promised land.

52. led forth: the Hebrew verb is often used of the journeys of the Israelites in the wilderness: cf. Exod. xv. 13–17.

like sheep: rather, 'like a flock' (of small cattle, sheep, goats, &c.).

wilderness: used here in its original sense, a tract of pasture land: so in lxv. 13 and Joshua ii. 22.

like a flock: rather, 'like a herd' (of large cattle, oxen, cows, &c.).

53. so that they feared not: though their enemies feared greatly, Exod. xiv. 25.

overwhelmed: see Exod. xv. 5, 10: cf. xiv. 28.

54. to the border of his sanctuary: render, 'to His holy

To this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.
He drove out the nations also before them, 55
And allotted them for an inheritance by line,
And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God, 56
And kept not his testimonies;
But turned back, and dealt treacherously like their fathers: 57
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
For they provoked him to anger with their high places, 58
And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

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territory' : i. e. the Holy Land. The word rendered 'border' in the O. T. often = 'bordered territory.'

this mountain: rather, 'to the mountain land which,' i. e. Canaan. The same word means 'mountain' and 'mountain land,' and the pronoun which usually means 'this' has sometimes, especially in poetry, the force of a relative: so in lxxiv. 2.

55. Render: 'And he drove out from before them (the Israelites) the (heathen) nations, And made their land (*lit.* 'them') become by lot the land of the inheritance,' &c.

allotted: the Hebrew word means commonly, as here, simply 'to grant,' with no reference to lot: cf. the English verb 'to allot.'

them: i. e. their territory; see below.

an inheritance by line: render, 'the land of the inheritance,' i. e. the land which they were to inherit. The word translated 'line' means also territory or land measured by line. See on verse 54 ('border'). In this verse, as in Joshua xxiii. 4 and often, nations are said to be allotted, though it is their territory that is meant.

56–58. *Ingratitude and rebellion of the people after the settlement in Canaan*, i. e. *in the time of the Judges* (see verse 60). In these verses there is a return to the thought pervading verses 9–42, the faithlessness of the people.

56. testimonies: rather, 'admonitions': 'solemn charges.'

57. deceitful bow: the same figure in Hos. vii. 16: a bow that disappoints its owner by not hitting the point aimed at: or that is so loosely spanned that it will not throw the arrow far enough if at all.

58. high places: the author of this Psalm antedates centralization of worship in Israel by many centuries. Worship at the high places was allowed until the reign of Josiah (d. B. C. 609).

59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth,
And greatly abhorred Israel:
60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent which he placed among men;
61 And delivered his strength into captivity,
And his glory into the adversary's hand.
62 He gave his people over also unto the sword;
And was wroth with his inheritance.
63 Fire devoured their young men;
And their maidens had no marriage-song.
64 Their priests fell by the sword;
And their widows made no lamentation.

59-64. *Once more God punishes them, giving them over now to their enemies.*

59. When God heard: omit 'When': it is not in the Hebrew.

greatly abhorred: better, 'utterly rejected.'

60. tabernacle: the Hebrew word (*mishkan* = 'dwelling-place') is the technical term for the elaborate structure which, according to the priestly writer (P) and Chronicles, formed the sanctuary in the wilderness. The Shiloh sanctuary is called also a temple (1 Sam. i. 9): it never took the place of the smaller sanctuaries, nor was it ever an exclusively Northern sanctuary, so that it is not the Northern Kingdom that is alluded to in this verse.

which he placed: read, 'in which he dwelt,' changing the vowels only. So the versions.

61. See 1 Sam. iv. 11, 21.

his strength: i. e. the ark; so called on account of its disastrous effect on Israel's foes: see 1 Sam. v. 7, vi. 19ff., and see on cxxxii. 8.

his glory: see 1 Sam. iv. 21 f.

62. See 1 Sam. iv. 2, 10, 17.

his inheritance: the people whom He had chosen to be His in a special way: even with them was He enraged.

63. had no marriage-song: *lit.* 'were not praised' (in song) because the young men who would have sung their praise had been consumed in the fire of war (Num. xxi. 28). Better read 'mourned not' (cf. verse 64^b); only the vowels need be changed. The unmarried men were unmourned by their lovers, and priests were unwept by their widows. Besides dying in war prematurely, they were unlamented by those nearest to them.

64. made no lamentation. In the versions the passive is used

Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, 65
Like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
And he smote his adversaries backward: 66
He put them to a perpetual reproach.
Moreover he refused the tent of Joseph, 67
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
But chose the tribe of Judah, 68
The mount Zion which he loved.
And he built his sanctuary like the heights, 69
Like the earth which he hath established for ever.
He chose David also his servant, 70

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as in the M. T. of verse 63b. Virgins were not praised, nor widows lamented. But the active must be read in both cases, see on verse 63.

65 f. *Yahweh once more pitied and delivered His people.*

65. Render: 'Then the Lord awaked as one asleep' (awakes), 'As a giant overcome with wine' (awakes). The Hebrew verb rendered incorrectly **that shouteth** is common in Arabic, but occurs nowhere else in the O. T. It is supported by the versions and by parallelism.

66. And he smote, &c.: the victories gained under Samuel, Saul, and David are referred to.

67–69. *Zion chosen instead of Shiloh.*

67. he refused: better, 'he rejected.'

the tent (of Joseph) means here 'tribe,' as the parallelism shows (**tribe of Ephraim**), so in lxxxiii. 6. The same word in Arabic means people: cf. the use of 'house' in many languages for the people in it.

68. mount Zion: the royal mountain often stands for the royal city Jerusalem, see Additional Note, p. 368.

which he loved: see xlvii. 4, lxxxvii. 2.

69. The temple at Jerusalem is as unchangeably fixed as the mountains and as the earth.

heights: i. e. mountains.

70–72. *The choice of David as King*, following 1 Sam. xvi. 11, xvii. 34; 2 Sam. vii. 8.

70. David ... his servant. The term 'servant of Jehovah' or its equivalent is used in a select sense. It is applied to the prophets (2 Kings ix. 7, xvii. 13; Jer. vii. 25 and often), to the Levitical singers in the temple (cxiii. 1, cxxxiv. 1, cxxxv. 1), and to such eminent men as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Job.

And took him from the sheepfolds:
71 From following the ewes that give suck he brought him,
To feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart;
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

79 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance;
Thy holy temple have they defiled;

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71. ewes, &c.: *lit.* 'those that give suck': the same word occurs in Isa. xl. 11.

To feed: *lit.* 'to shepherd'; the ruler is often viewed as a shepherd in the O. T. There may be an implied reference to David's having been a shepherd-boy. The survey ends with David: Why?

PSALM LXXIX.

Theme. God's aid invoked in a time of great national distress.

I. *Contents.* (1) The complaint. The land is invaded, the temple defiled, Jerusalem lies in ruin, God's people either slaughtered or dishonoured (verses 1–4).

(2) The prayer. God is entreated to pardon His people and to intervene on their behalf (verses 5–13).

Most Psalms of this kind, threnodes, have two principal parts, complaint and prayer: see Ps. cii. Pss. lxxiv, lxxix have many words and expressions in common.

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm goes with Ps. lxxiv, though some say lxxiv implies the destruction of the temple (as in B. C. 586) and the present Psalm its defilement. But the distinction cannot be sustained: see 2 Macc. viii. 2–4. A Maccabean date would suit both Psalms, but no more than this can be said. The particularism of both Psalms accords well with the revival of nationalism during the Syrian persecution: see on lxxiv (*Contents*).

1–4. *The complaint.*

1. the heathen: *lit.* 'nations': but in the plural the Hebrew means 'heathen nation,' 'Gentiles.' The same Hebrew word is translated 'Gentiles' in Judges iv. 2, 13, 16 and in Mal. i. 11, the word which in the N. T. translates the Greek *ethne.*

inheritance: the word denotes generally God's people, the Israelites (lxxiv. 2, lxxviii. 62, 71): here, however, it = 'the land in which they dwell.' Perhaps Jerusalem is meant: see Exod. xv. 17.

defiled: no proof that it was not destroyed, see Ezek. xxv. 3.

They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be 2
meat unto the fowls of the heaven,
The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water round about 3
Jerusalem;
And there was none to bury them.
We are become a reproach to our neighbours, 4
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
How long, O LORD, wilt thou be angry for ever? 5
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

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2. saints: better, 'favoured ones,' i. e. those who are objects of the Divine favour, see vol. i. p. 360 f.

3. This verse is quoted in 1 Macc. vii. 16 with the ordinary formula of quotation from scripture. The Psalmist laments loudly not only the relentless butchery of the enemy, but also, and especially, the fact that the bodies could not be buried. It was regarded among many ancient nations (see Homer), and especially among the Hebrews, as a dreadful calamity to be deprived of burial after death, see lxxiv. 14, lxxviii. 64; Jer. vii. 32 f., viii. 2, ix. 21, xv. 3, xvi. 4, xix. 7; and cf. Deut. xxviii. 26, and also 1 Macc. i. 37.

4. This verse almost *verbatim* as xliv. 14; Duhm thinks it inserted here from that Psalm.

5–13. *The prayer.*

5. This verse almost *verbatim* as lxxxix. 47, render: 'How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou be angry? will thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?'

How long and **for ever** are characteristic expressions in Pss. lxxiv and lxxix: see lxxiv. 10, lxxix. 5: cf. xiii. 2, lxxx. 4, lxxxix. 46. The very question 'how long' involves the belief in God's moral government of the world.

Verses 6 f. are found almost *verbatim* in Jer. x. 25. They are original in Jeremiah, since it is only in the prophetic context that the words are fully intelligible. Duhm holds that these verses were not in the Psalm originally, since the thought of verse 6 is first expressed and that of verse 7 has been already uttered. But such subjective criticism has very little value.

The thought implied in verses 6 f. is: 'Manifest thy indignation towards thy foes, not towards us thy flock who uphold thy religion: let them suffer, not we: they deserve it, we do not.'

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not,
And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his habitation.
8 Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers:
Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:
For we are brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:
And deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

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6. kingdoms: in Jer. x. 25 families (subdivisions of tribes). The Psalmist has the better word, an argument favouring the view that he had the older text before him.

7. Cf. xiv. 4.

8. the iniquities of our forefathers: render, 'our former iniquities': so the ancient versions, Duhm, and Gunkel.

prevent us: i. e. 'come to meet us': in Old English 'prevent' meant 'to go before,' to anticipate, 'Let thy compassions be in front of us, so that we may meet them.' The same word in xxi. 4, lix. 11.

very low: the Hebrew verb means literally 'to be reduced in circumstances': and so 'to be impoverished.' But it means to be reduced in strength in cxvi. 6 and cxlii. 7, and that is probably its meaning here.

9 f. If thou, O Jehovah, wilt not come to our help for our own sake, Yet deliver us for the sake of thy own good name. Why should the heathen have occasion to say we have no God to help us?

9. God of our salvation: Hebrew makes a large use of the annexed noun instead of the adjective. The above expression = 'the God who delivers us' : = 'the delivering God.' The Psalmist entreats God to be true to Himself, i. e. to deliver, seeing He is the Deliverer.

and purge away our sins: the word rendered 'purge away' means primarily 'to cover': then as to cover a crime is to forgive and forget, the word naturally came to mean 'to pardon.' The verb is used of appeasing an angry person, as in Gen. xxxii. 21, and in late parts of the O. T. (P, Ezek., &c.) of atoning for sin by sacrifice.

thy name: i. e. 'thine own self.' God's name stands for God as known. With pronominal suffix it has often the force of an emphatic pronoun. In lv. 6 'unto thee' is parallel to 'unto thy name' ('O Jehovah').

Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? 10
Let the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed
Be known among the heathen in our sight.
Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; 11
According to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to death;
And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their 12 bosom
Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture 13
Will give thee thanks for ever:
We will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

For the Chief Musician; set to Shoshannim Eduth. 80
A Psalm of Asaph.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, 1

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10. Wherefore, &c.: the same question in cxv. 2 and Joel ii. 17: cf. Exod. xxxii. 12; Ps. xlii. 3; Mic. vii. 10.

among the heathen: rather, (be made known) 'to the heathen': cf. 'in our sight' (*lit.* 'before our eyes').

11. preserve: read, 'release' or 'set free,' changing vowels only: so Pesh., Targ. The verb thus assumed occurs in cv. 20, cxlvi. 7.

those that are appointed to death: *lit.* 'sons of death,' but in Semitic the word 'son' denotes one having the property of: e. g. 'a son of wisdom' = 'a wise son,' &c. So 'sons of death' are men living a death-like (i. e. miserable) life. The expression is, however, generally interpreted as meaning 'men condemned to death,' see 1 Sam. xx. 31, xxvi. 16.

12. into their bosom: the folds of the garment above the girdle are used in the East as pockets for holding articles of various kinds.

13. sheep of thy pasture: rather, 'the flock of Thy shepherding': 'the flock which thou dost shepherd': see lxxiv. 1 and lxxx. 1.

PSALM LXXX.

Theme. Prayer for the return of the good estate of the Northern Kingdom.

Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;

I. *Title. Shoshannim Eduth* (= 'Lilies, a testimony') is no doubt the name of a song to the melody of which this Psalm was to be sung. The same melody is probably prescribed for Pss. xlv and lxx, though the title varies slightly. In the LXX and Vulg. very awkward attempts are made to translate the Hebrew name of this song ('For them who shall be changed').

II. *Contents.* The Psalm has the outward appearance of having three strophes or stanzas, each ending with the same refrain (verses 3, 7, and 19). But according to subject-matter it falls naturally into these six sections:

(1) God is entreated to come and restore the fortunes of the Northern Kingdom (verses 1–3).

(2) Surprise is expressed at God's continued anger and the consequent suffering of the people (verses 4–7).

(3) Israel is compared to a vine-tree carefully planted and for a while watched, and then given over to the slender mercies of ferocious beasts (verses 8–13).

(4) Prayer for the restoration of the Divine favour (verses 14–17).

(5) Israel's vow (verse 18).

(6) Closing refrain (verse 19).

III. *Authorship and Date.* Many and divergent have been the opinions put forth and defended as to the aim and age of this Psalm, and the fact that each opinion has been strenuously maintained shows how uncertain the evidence is.

It is implied in the Psalm that the Northern Kingdom is in great distress. The writer prays that the prosperity of former days may be restored. This is the only Psalm in which Benjamin is reckoned along with Ephraim and Manasseh as belonging to the Northern Kingdom. Joseph (= Ephraim and Manasseh) stands for the Northern Kingdom as being its most important constituent. This Psalmist was probably a member of the Northern Kingdom, living in the later years of that kingdom, say in the reign of Menahem, when the hand of Assyria was very heavy upon the Israelitish people. See 2 Kings xv. 17–22.

Pss. lxxx f. seem both to have sprung out of the Northern Kingdom, and the same was probably true of Pss. lxxvii f. (both 'Joseph' Psalms) in their original form. We have two prophets of the Northern Kingdom—Amos and Hosea, though the former was a native of Judah. Why should not the Northern Kingdom have its singers and its songs?

The date just proposed for this Psalm, a short time before B. C. 722 when Assyria conquered Israel, seems implied in the title of the LXX, which has: 'A Psalm concerning the Assyrians.'

Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up 2
thy might,
And come to save us.
Turn us again, O God; 3
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

O LORD God of hosts, 4

There is no allusion in the Psalm to the reunion of the two kingdoms, though the Targ. assumes the contrary, see on verse 3. Verses 12 f. show that the evils lamented in the Psalm are experienced in Palestine and not in any foreign land.

1–3. *Prayer for a return of past prosperity.*

1. Shepherd of Israel: see on lxxiv. 1.

cherubim: The ark taken to battle as a sign of the Divine presence had figures of cherubims on it (so P, &c.): perhaps, however, the clouds are meant: see on xviii. 10.

shine forth: i. e. make manifest thy power by delivering us: see l. 2, xciv. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 2.

2. Benjamin: Joseph and Benjamin were by the same mother, and are for that reason here associated. In Num. ii. 17 ff. Benjamin and Ephraim are associated. Some omit Benjamin here: rhythm would gain by this.

might: the Hebrew word is a common one for the valour of the soldier: see Judges viii. 21; Prov. viii. 14; Isa. iii. 25. God's valour is inactive—that is implied in the verb **stir up**. Another form of the same verb (Hiph.) would mean that His valour is asleep.

come: Heb. 'go,' 'depart,' i. e. for battle.

3. The words in this verse are a refrain which occurs also in verses 7 and 19.

Turn us again: i. e. restore our fortunes: bring back the prosperity we once had. Verses 5–8 prove that this is the sense intended, and not 'bring us back from exile,' see on lxxxv. 1.

And cause thy face to shine: i. e. look bright, pleasant, the reverse of angry: see Num. vi. 25, and cf. Ps. iv. 6.

and we shall be saved: rather, 'so that we may obtain deliverance.'

4–7. *Surprise and impatience at God's delay.*

4. Render: 'O Jehovah of Hosts. How long (will it be the case that) thou fumest with anger, notwithstanding the prayer of thy people?'

How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
5 Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears,
And given them tears to drink in large measure.
6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours:
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
7 Turn us again, O God of hosts;
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.
8 Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt:
Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.
9 Thou preparedst *room* before it,
And it took deep root, and filled the land.
10 The mountains were covered with the shadow of it,

against the prayer: i. e. with thy people when they pray. The Hebrew can mean: 'notwithstanding the prayer,' &c.

5. Thou hast given them tears for their daily food: instead of eating and drinking as in better days they were wont to do, they spend their time in weeping: see on cii. 9.

large measure: the Hebrew means a 'tierce' or 'third' of something, though of what is unknown; *lit.* 'Thou makest them drink a tierce of tears.' Instead of **them** the LXX, Jero. have 'us' in both clauses of this verse: cf. verse 6.

6. strife: i. e. an object of strife. By transposing the second and third letters of the Hebrew word we obtain the word used in xliv. 14[b] for the derisive shaking or wagging of the head, and this goes well with the parallel clause (**laugh,** &c.); so 'an object of head shaking unto,' &c.

our neighbours = our enemies (words varied for parallelism): the smaller nations or tribes in the immediate vicinity of Samaria (Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, &c.).

7. See on verse 3. For 'God of hosts' read 'Jehovah of hosts,' though the latter phrase makes bad Hebrew, and is probably shortened from 'Jehovah, God of hosts,' which is good Hebrew.

8–13. *Israel, once cared for by God, is now abandoned.*

8. a vine: for the figure see Gen. xlix. 22; Hos. i. 7; and especially Isa. v. 1–7.

Thou didst drive out . . . and plantedst: the same antithesis in xliv. 3.

9. Thou preparedst *room* before it: render: 'Thou didst make a clear place before it': i. e. remove whatever stood in the way of its free growth, e. g. stones, thorns, &c.: see Isa. v. 2.

10 f. The growth of the nation is compared to that of a vine-

And the boughs thereof were *like* cedars of God.
She sent out her branches unto the sea, 11
And her shoots unto the River.
Why hast thou broken down her fences, 12
So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, 13

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tree which spread southwards and northwards (verse 10), eastward and westward (verse 11) : i. e. the nation brought from Egypt as a very little thing was so carefully watched and protected that it soon took possession of the whole land of Canaan : 'yet now thou leavest it to languish and die!'

10. The mountains : the mountainous land in the south is meant : the four quarters are thus mentioned : see Deut. xi. 24.

And the boughs thereof, &c. : translate : 'And the majestic cedars with its boughs.' The mountains of the south and the cedars of Lebanon in the north were alike covered : the mountains with the shadow, and the cedar-trees with the branches of this all-spreading vine.

cedars of God : in Hebrew, as also occasionally in Arabic, the added epithetic 'of God' (= Godlike) implies greatness, majesty : see xxxvi. 6 ; Job i. 16, and the rendering above. The phrase can hardly mean 'cedars planted by God,' i. e. those which men have not planted, for such cedars are less, not greater, than others.

11. She sent out : Heb. 'it' (the vine, fem. in Heb.) 'continually sent out,' &c.

branches : the Hebrew word denotes what grows out of the main hulk of the tree. The word rendered 'boughs' in verse 10 refers particularly to what grows out of the branches or higher part.

sea : i. e. Mediterranean, the only sea known to the ancient Israelites. Here it stands for the west.

the River : i. e. the Euphrates, the only considerable river about which the ancient Israelites thought much—the Nile was too far away.

12 f. The poet asks in blank amazement why He who had so long and so lovingly cared for His chosen people should now abandon them to cruel and destructive foes.

12. fences : that vineyards were fenced round is shown by Num. xxii. 24 ; Isa. v. 6. It is the boundary fortifications of land and cities that are meant.

13. The boar stands to the Israelite for the worst of beasts—unclean, savage, &c. **boar** and **wild beasts** do not represent any particular nation or nations.

doth ravage it : better, 'gnaws it.'

And the wild beasts of the field feed on it.
14 Turn again, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:
Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine,
15 And the stock which thy right hand hath planted,
And the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.
16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down:
They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

14-17. *Prayer that God's favour may be restored.*

14. Render: 'O Jehovah of Hosts, look once more, we beseech thee, from heaven, and see and visit this vine.'

God: read 'Jehovah' as in verse 7. The Hebrew is ungrammatical in both places.

15. Render: 'And protect that which thy right hand has planted.'

the stock: for the Hebrew word, which occurs nowhere else, and yields no possible sense, read, 'cover,' 'protect.' making a slight change in the text. Or, perhaps, the word is to be omitted and the verse to be joined immediately with the preceding one: 'and visit this vine (verse 16), which thy right hand has planted.'

And the branch, &c.: the following is a literal translation of the Hebrew: 'and over (the) son whom thou strengthenedst for thyself': but the preposition 'upon' suggests that the words are out of connexion, and the sense of the clause proves this. The words are taken, by a copyist's error, with very little change from 18^{b}, where they are wanted.

16. It: i.e. the vine: in verses 11 f. we have 'she' representing the same word, because in Hebrew the word for vine (*gephen*) is of feminine gender.

is burned: as fuel.

cut down: as useless: see Isa. xxxii. 12.

They perish: i. e. the Israelites who are symbolized by the vine. The metaphor is now given up. 'The vine is burnt,' &c., 'the people whom the vine stands for perish.'

17. Let thy hand be upon: to protect.

the man of thy right hand: i. e. the man whom thy right hand plantedst: the parallelism with the next clause shows this is the sense. Of course Israel is meant.

son of man is simply Hebrew idiom for 'human being.' See on lxxix. 11, and on lxxiii. 5.

whom thou madest strong: the Hebrew verb means here,

So shall we not go back from thee: 18
Quicken thou us, and we will call upon thy name.
Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts; 19
Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

For the Chief Musician; set to the Gittith. **81**
A Psalm of Asaph.
Sing aloud unto God our strength: 1

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as in Isa. xliv. 14, 'to rear': the poet still harks back to the figure of the vine which God 'planted,' and 'reared.'

18. A vow to worship God if He hears the prayer now offered.

Quicken: an old English word meaning 'to bring to life': then 'to revive one who is depressed and desponding': this latter is the sense here and in Ps. cxix. verses 25, 37, 40, &c. See also lxxxv. 6.

19. See verses 3 and 7. Omit **God** and see on verse 7.

PSALM LXXXI.

Theme. Summons to keep some festival. Disobedience of Israel and its punishment.

I. *Title.* **Set to the Gittith:** i. e. to be sung to the tune called after Gath: cf. the tunes 'Haverfordwest,' 'Nottingham,' 'Bangor,' &c.

II. *Contents.* (1) Summons to keep festival (verses 1–5^b).

(2) Jehovah's claims upon Israel on account of His gracious doings for them in Egypt and in the wilderness (verses 5^c–10).

(3) Israel's ingratitude and disobedience (verses 11 f.).

(4) Blessings promised to obedience (verses 13–16).

In verses 1–5^b and verses 5^c–16 we have two originally quite independent Psalms. In the first there is a summons to keep some festival, and the spirit pervading this section is one of superabundant joyousness. In verse 5^c we are abruptly transferred into the heart of a loud lament over the unbelief of Israel notwithstanding the wonders of love wrought on their behalf in Egypt and in the wilderness. In this second section the nation is in no festive mood: it had sinned and was now suffering for that sin in some terrible way. Verses 5^c–16 resemble Ps. lxxviii and other didactic Psalms.

In verses 1–5^b we have probably a hymn chanted regularly at the beginning of the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, both of which were inaugurated at full moon by the blowing of trumpets. Though we have no definite evidence that trumpets were blown at either Passover or Tabernacles, there is evidence for believing that this took place at all the festivals.

Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
2 Take up the psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For it is a statute for Israel,
An ordinance of the God of Jacob.

III. *Authorship and Date.* Verses 1–5[b] is a companion Psalm to Ps. lxxx, and, it is likely, also to Ps. lxxviii in its original form. This would make this small Psalm older than B. C. 722, when Samaria fell into Assyrian hands.

Verses 5[c]–16 seem to presuppose Deut. xxxii (see verses 9, 16) and Jer. vii. 24 (see verses 13 f.). We may then assume that this Psalm (5[c]–16) belongs to the reign of Josiah (d. B. C. 609) or to a later period.

1–5[b]. *Summons to celebrate the festival.*

1. Sing aloud: Heb. 'sing with a loud piercing sound.'

God our strength: read, 'the God of our refuge,' i. e. 'the God who is our refuge.' No change in the consonants is required.

2. The verbs for **take up** and **bring hither** mean respectively 'to raise' and 'to give,' and both are used with the word 'voice' in the sense of putting forth, giving out: it is only by analogy that they are here applied to 'Psalm' and 'timbrel': render, 'Sing a Psalm and strike the timbrel.'

timbrel: the hand-drum of the Easterns; it resembled the small drum of negroes and of Christy minstrels. It was made of a stretched skin with a margin of wood around it.

For **harp** and **psaltery** substitute 'lyre' and 'harp': see Introd., ch. iv.

3. trumpet: Heb. *shofar*, i. e. the ram's horn trumpet. In the Pentateuch the blowing of the *shofar* is expressly prescribed in connexion with the year of Jubilee only: see Lev. xxv. 9. On this trumpet, and the metallic trumpet engraved on the arch of Titus, see Introd., p. 29 f.

on our solemn feast day: rather, 'for the day of our pilgrimage festival.'

4–5[b]. Reason for keeping the feast. It was for that purpose appointed by Jehovah.

4. For it: i. e. the feast of verse 3.

ordinance: the Hebrew word means primarily what God as Ruler and Judge has enacted.

He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony, 5
When he went out over the land of Egypt:
Where I heard a language that I knew not.
I removed his shoulder from the burden: 6
His hands were freed from the basket.
Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; 7
I answered thee in the secret place of thunder;

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5. According to Duhm this verse ought to be reckoned with the following verses.

5ab. (He appointed) **it**: i.e. the festival; see verse 3.

in Joseph: in lxxx. 1 as well as here 'Joseph' and 'Israel' are used interchangeably.

testimony: 'solemn admonition': see Introd. to Ps. cxix, p. 254.

over (the land of Egypt): rather, 'against.' The reference is to what God did by way of punishing the Egyptians for their obduracy. It was then that God entered into those covenant relations with Israel out of which sprang the commemorative feasts.

5c–16. *The second Psalm.*

5c. Render: '[In Egypt] he [Israel] heard the language of one whom he knew not.' The words in brackets are probably to be supplied, having dropped out in the process of uniting the two Psalms into one. The verbs should be read in the third person with LXX, Pesh. When God revealed Himself to His chosen people in Egypt He was largely unknown to them. For other interpretations of these difficult words, see the larger commentaries.

6–10 contain, in summary, an account of what God did for the nation in Egypt and in the wilderness, and of what He commanded them in the covenant made with them on Sinai. It is God, who called them when as yet they knew not His voice, that speaks all through this section.

6. Read and render: 'I removed the burden from thy shoulder, Thy hands,' &c. In verses 6–10 Jehovah addresses Israel directly in the second person. In Egypt some Israelites had to carry heavy burdens on their shoulders; others had to carry with their hands baskets containing bricks, one being suspended from each end of a yoke which was laid across the shoulders.

7. in the secret place of thunder: better, 'at Suther Ra'am.' We have here a proper name parallel to 'the waters of Meribah'; though we do not elsewhere in the O.T. meet with this place name. If the words do not form a proper name (so A.R.V.) the

I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. [Selah
8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wouldest hearken unto me!
9 There shall no strange god be in thee;
Neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
10 I am the LORD thy God,
Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 But my people hearkened not to my voice;
And Israel would none of me.

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reference must be to the thunder cloud in which God dwells: see xviii. 11, 13, lxxvii. 17 ff.

waters of Meribah. For the two testings at Meribah see on lxxviii. 15. The proving or testing is mentioned as a proof of the Divine favour.

8. Hear, &c.: cf. with this Deut. vi. 4-9, the *Shema'* (='Hear') as the Jews call it.

testify: the verb in Hebrew means to solemnly exhort or charge: see l. 7, lxxxi. 9, and cf. the cognate noun 'testimony' in verse 5 (see on).

9f. An epitome of Exod. xx. 2-6.

9. strange god: another than Israel's own God, Jehovah: see xliv. 20; Isa. xliii. 12; Prov. ii. 16, v. 3, 20. A 'strange woman' is one who is not the man's wife = a harlot. Jehovah is married to Israel, and the latter is not to play the harlot by going after other gods: see Exod. xxxiv. 39; Deut. xxxi. 16. The word translated 'strange' in 9^b='foreign': so here 'a foreign god' is meant, i. e. a god worshipped by foreigners: see Deut. xxxii. 12. But the same thing is intended, the variety of expression in Hebrew being due to the needs of parallelism.

10. Render: 'I, Jehovah, am thy God Who,' &c.

Open thy mouth wide: i. e. be ready to take in my commandments as you do your food, then I will teach you: virtually the words mean, 'be teachable and I will teach.' So the Targ.

11 f. Israel ungrateful and rebellious. The words in verses 6-10 are in the main supposed to be spoken on Sinai, with slight changes to suit the occasion of the Psalm. But here God speaks about what followed. Notwithstanding the solemn charges and the gracious promises Israel was disobedient. These verses are taken, with but slight variation, from Jer. vii. 24: cf. Isa. xlviii. 17-19.

So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, 12
That they might walk in their own counsels.
Oh that my people would hearken unto me, 13
That Israel would walk in my ways!
I should soon subdue their enemies, 14
And turn my hand against their adversaries.
The haters of the LORD should submit themselves unto him: 15
But their time should endure for ever.
He should feed them also with the finest of the wheat: 16
And with honey out of the rock should I satisfy thee.

A Psalm of Asaph. **82**

God standeth in the congregation of God; 1

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12. stubbornness: render, with the versions, 'lust' or 'sensual passion.'

13–16. Jehovah's promise of deliverance to the generation then living (not to the Israelites in the wilderness as LXX) on condition of obedience.

15. Render: 'Those who hate Jehovah would come cringing to them (my people), But their time (of anguish) would continue for ever.'

In verses 15 f. for **should** read 'would.' These verses described what would come about if only the Israelites were obedient.

submit themselves: the Hebrew means: 'come cringing, making a show of obedience, though inwardly rebellious.'

unto him: render: 'to them,' referring to 'my people' in verse 13. In Heb. 'people' is a singular noun, and it often takes pronouns and verbs in the singular, even when in the immediate context (see verse 14) the plural pronoun or verb is employed. Perhaps, however, Jehovah is meant.

their time: i. e. 'their time of distress.' Similarly in Heb. 'day' means often 'day of trouble': see xxxvii. 13.

16. For **He should** read 'I would.' Jehovah is still speaking.

finest of the wheat: *lit.* 'the fat,' i. e. the best. The expression is taken from Deut. xxxii. 14.

And with honey, &c.: taken from Deut. xxxii. 13.

thee: read 'them' (i. e. Israel) with LXX, Pesh., Jero.

PSALM LXXXII.

Theme. Jehovah, the Judge of the gods of the heathen, is entreated to put an end to their evil rule.

He judgeth among the gods.
2 How long will ye judge unjustly,
And respect the persons of the wicked? [Selah

I. *Contents.* (1) The tutelary gods of the heathen nations arraigned before Jehovah (verse 1).

(2) The evils on earth due to the misrule of these gods (verses 2–4).

(3) The folly and ultimate downfall of these gods (verses 5–7).

(4) Prayer that Jehovah may take the whole earth under His control and establish justice among men (verse 8).

The above analysis assumes that by 'gods' in verse 1 we are to understand the national gods of the heathen, who are supposed to live in heaven, controlling the affairs of the peoples they presided over, just as Jehovah, originally the national God of Israel, was supposed to rule over His own people. See Deut. iv. 19, xxix. 25, xxxii. 8; Isa. xxiv. 21: cf. Sir. xvii. 17.

The Hebrew word *Elohim*, meaning 'God' or 'gods' (of the heathen), is not once used in the O.T. for men in high position, judges, &c., nor for angels: the passages adduced to prove the contrary do nothing of the kind.

This Psalm resembles closely Ps. lviii, as commentators have generally pointed out: but the resemblance is closer than the bulk of these commentators have perceived, for the word rendered 'in silence' in lviii. 1 should be read 'O ye Gods' (so R.V. marg.), and these gods are no other than those of Ps. lxxxii.

The Israelites allowed the existence, though they disallowed the claims, of heathen deities. For a discussion of the development of thought about God see the works on O.T. theology.

There is very little in the Psalm to help in fixing

II. *Its Authorship and Date.* It was written at a time when things went badly with Israel, which is about all that can be said.

The injustice and cruelty complained of might have been due to the Babylonians, Persians, Samaritans, or Syrians.

1. *Jehovah judging the gods.*

1. standeth: as judge: see Isa. iii. 13.

the congregation of God: the assembly of gods summoned by Jehovah in heaven. The national assembly of Israel is also called 'the congregation of Jehovah' (Num. xxvii. 17: cf. Ps. lxxiv. 2).

2–4. *The injustice and partiality shown on the earth.* Though it is men who actually act in the way described, their gods are responsible.

Judge the poor and fatherless: 3
Do justice to the afflicted and destitute.
Rescue the poor and needy: 4
Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.
They know not, neither do they understand; 5
They walk to and fro in darkness:
All the foundations of the earth are moved.
I said, Ye are gods, 6
And all of you sons of the Most High.
Nevertheless ye shall die like men, 7

3. Judge: i. e. protect, defend. The verb rendered judge means to rule, deliver, defend, &c.

poor: the Hebrew word means especially one reduced in position—one who has seen better days. The verb of the same root is found in lxxiv. 8, 'we are *brought* (very) *low*.'

fatherless: the Hebrew, like the cognate Arabic word, means orphan in the strict sense, i. e. one deprived of either parent or of both parents. But in the O.T. the term means in most if not all cases 'fatherless'; and it is so translated in every instance except in Lam. v. 2. The word has nearly always the idea of being destitute and helpless: and in the east much more than in the west, it is the father that is the bread-winner.

Do justice to: Heb. 'vindicate'; 'clear of charges (wrongly) brought against them.'

afflicted: i. e. here wronged by slanderers.

destitute: belonging to the poorer class, poor and poorly connected.

4. Rescue: therefore they are in the hands of their oppressors, and cannot of themselves escape.

poor and needy: the first word is identical in Hebrew with that so rendered in verse 3, but it is often joined to the word rendered 'needy' to denote one that has lost place and caste and is withal very poor.

5–7. These gods are in the dark, and will come to nought. God speaks now not *to* the heathen deities, but *of* them.

5. the foundations of the earth are moved: the basis of moral order is upturned. The same figure in xi. 3 and lxxv. 3: cf. Prov. ii. 10–15.

In 6 f. God addresses the heathen directly once more.

6. I said: i.e. I said truly: see John xviii. 37.

7. Nevertheless: though I described you truly as gods, ye shall die, &c.

And fall like one of the princes.
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth:
For thou shalt inherit all the nations.

83 A Song, a Psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, keep not thou silence:
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult:
And they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

---

like one of the princes: read, 'like a perishable human being': this gives good parallelism, and the Hebrew requires the insertion of but one consonant (*b*) in the word for 'princes.' Duhm reads 'like one of the demons' (see Gen. vi. 1–4), which involves less change in the text, but gives a less suitable sense.

8. Prayer that God may rule the earth.

Render: 'Do thou arise, O God, and judge' (='rule,' see on verse 3) 'the earth: For all nations are thy possession.'

PSALM LXXXIII.

Theme. Prayer for a judgement on the nations which have combined against Israel.

I. *Title.* This is the last of the twelve Asaph Psalms.

II. *Contents.* The Psalm has two natural divisions separated by Selah.

(1) Complaint followed by a description of the combined attack against Judah (verses 1–8).

(2) Prayer for the dispersion and downfall of the foe (verses 9–18).

III. *Authorship and Date.* We have in this Psalm a poetical description of the opposition to Israel in the poet's day, the national names being given as types. We know of no one period at which the peoples named were combined against Israel. The state of things described in 1 Macc. v might well have drawn from the poet the bitter wail, the pathetic prayer of this Psalm.

1–9. *The Complaint.*

1. A cry of distress. The language of this verse seems based on Isa. lxii. 1, 6 f. It is implied in the Hebrew of this verse that God (1) cannot speak—He is dumb. (2) He will not speak—He is silent. (3) He is indifferent—He is inactive. These distinctions may, however, be due to the parallelism.

2–5. *The conduct of the enemies described.*

2. have lifted up the head: an attitude of pride and defiance: see iii. 4, xxvii. 6.

They take crafty counsel against thy people,
And consult together against thy hidden ones.
They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation;
That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
For they have consulted together with one consent;
Against thee do they make a covenant:
The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab, and the Hagarenes;
Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre:
Assyria also is joined with them;

---

3. thy hidden ones: see xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20. LXX and Pesh. read 'thy favoured ones,' Aq., Sym., Jero. the singular—'thy hidden thing,' i. e. the temple: cf. Ezek. vii. 22.

4. from being a nation: that they may be no longer a nation. The same phrase in Jer. xlviii. 2: cf. Isa. vii. 8, xvii. 1.

5. Read: 'For they plot together with one heart, And against Thee they make a league.' The change required in the Hebrew for this rendering is very small.

with one consent: i. e. 'with one heart': see Jer. xxxii. 39: cf. Josh. ix. 2.

6–8. The confederate nations are enumerated in the following order. (1) Those dwelling south and south-east (verses 6, 7^a).
(2) Those living near the Mediterranean coast (verse 7^b).
(3) Assyria (north-east) and Edom (in the extreme south) (verse 8).

6. tents: i. e. 'tent-dwellers.' The word belongs also to Ishmaelites, 'the tent-folk' (or Beduins) 'of Edom and of the Ishmaelites': so Pesh.

Hagarenes or Hagrites: a people living in Gilead east of Jordan: see 1 Chron. v. 10, 19.

7. Gebal: a tribe living in the northern part of the Edomite mountain-land.

Ammon: for long the unrelenting foes of Israel: their home was east of Jordan.

Amalek: also bitter foes of Israel from olden times. They dwelt east of the Arabah and also in the desert of the Sinaitic peninsula. Philistia in the south and Tyre in the north would take in the whole of the country lying towards the Mediterranean coast.

8. Assyria: the ancient kingdom of Assyria is meant: an

They have holpen the children of Lot. [Selah
9 Do thou unto them as unto Midian;
As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the river Kishon:
10 Which perished at En-dor;
They became as dung for the earth.

---

excellent example of the powerful and relentless foes with which Israel had to deal. This great power—the 'Rome of the East'—conquered the Northern Kingdom in B. C. 722, but was itself conquered by Babylon in B. C. 606.

They have holpen: Heb. as R. V. marg., 'They have been an arm': cf. Isa. xxxiii. 2: 'holpen' is Old English for 'helped.'

children of Lot: = 'the descendants of Lot,' i. e. the Moabites and Ammonites who have been already mentioned separately, but are here named afresh in order to say that Assyria helped them in their hostility. No particular historical incident is referred to, but a general attitude.

9-18. *Prayer that the enemy may be destroyed and confounded, and so brought to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jehovah.*

9-12. *The destruction desired for the enemy illustrated from past history.*

9. Midian: the reference is to the confederacy against Israel described in Judges 7 f.

Sisera, Jabin: the incident referred to is that in which Jabin, a Canaanitish king (see Joshua xi. 1 ff.), and Sisera his general were defeated by Barak and Deborah: see Judges iv f. Though, however, Sisera appears in Judges iv as Jabin's general, in Judges v (Deborah's Song) he comes before us as himself a Canaanitish King. We have probably in these chapters two different traditions.

river (Kishon): rather, 'wady' or 'winter torrent.' The victory was in no small measure due to the swelling of the Kishon: many of the enemy were carried away by its force (Judges v. 21).

10. En-dor: this village lay to the south of Mount Tabor, quite close to Nain, and is still known by its Biblical name. It is not mentioned in Judges as the scene of the defeat of Sisera. Taanach and Megiddo are, however, named in connexion with that defeat, and in the M. T. of Joshua xvii. 11, En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo appear together, though in a critical text 'En-dor' must be omitted.

as dung: omit 'as' (it is not in the Hebrew) and render: 'they became dung for the ground.' They lay unburied—a great dishonour and calamity: see on lxxix. 3, and cf. 1 Macc. vii. 16: see also 2 Kings ix. 37; Jer. viii. 2.

Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb; 11
Yea, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna:
Who said, Let us take to ourselves in possession 12
The habitations of God.
O my God, make them like the whirling dust; 13
As stubble before the wind.
As the fire that burneth the forest, 14
And as the flame that setteth the mountains on fire;
So pursue them with thy tempest, 15
And terrify them with thy storm.

---

11. This verse harks back to Gideon's victory over the Midianites (verse 8): **Oreb** (=raven) and **Zeeb** (=wolf) were the generals (Judges vii. 25; Isa. x. 26), and **Zebah** and **Zalmunna** the kings (Judges viii. 5 ff., 12, 18 ff.) of Midian.

12. Who said: rather, 'Who have said': the 'Who' stands for Judah's present foes.

The habitations of God: the land given by God to Israel, and peculiarly His as the people are His: see xxiii. 2, lxxiv. 20. The LXX has 'the altar of God': or, according to some MSS., 'the sanctuary of God.' In Targ., Jero. 'beauty of God' is the rendering, the reference being to the temple: see on verse 3.

13–15. *The destruction desired for the enemy illustrated from nature.*

13. whirling dust: like the wheel-shaped figures made by the wind out of fading leaves, &c. The same expression occurs in Isa. xvii. 13. Thomson is inclined to think that the reference is to the globular heads of the wild artichoke. See *Land and Book* (1881), vol. i. p. 212.

stubble: 'chaff' conveys the sense better: i. e. the empty husks of corn and grain. Threshing-floors were and are still on high levels, so that the wind may drive the chaff away.

14. fire . . . forest: a burning forest is one of the wildest scenes in nature.

mountains: thorns and briars grow luxuriantly on the mountains, and in the hot season they may often be seen all ablaze. See Thomson, *Land and Book* (1881), vol. ii. p. 292.

15. So pursue them: there is no need with Kirkpatrick to render—'So shalt thou pursue them.' The Hebrew tense (impf.) used here often expresses a wish, like the optative in Greek: 'So mayest thou pursue them,' &c.

16 Fill their faces with confusion;
That they may seek thy name, O LORD.
17 Let them be ashamed and dismayed for ever;
Yea, let them be confounded and perish:
18 That they may know that thou alone, whose name is JEHOVAH,
Art the Most High over all the earth.

84 For the Chief Musician; set to the Gittith.
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 How amiable are thy tabernacles,

16–18. *Prayer that the enemy may through their calamities be brought to acknowledge Jehovah.*

16. confusion: rather, 'disgrace,' 'ignominy,' or 'dishonour.'

thy name = thee. God's name is God Himself as revealed. But the phrase God's name is often simply another way of saying God Himself.

17. Render: 'Let them be foiled and dismayed for ever: Let them become pale with shame and perish.'

18. That they may know: better, 'That they may get to know,' so the Hebrew.

that thou alone, &c. The rendering in R. V. marg. ('that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art,' &c.) is favoured by the Hebrew punctuation (accents), but the R. V. gives the sense intended.

Psalms lxxxiv–lxxxix constitute a Yahwistic appendix to the Asaph Psalms lxxiii–lxxxiii, though the rest of Books II and III (Pss. xlii–lxxxiii) are Elohistic: see Introd. to Book III, p. 37. The Divine name *Elohim* does, however, occur in this small group more than one-third as many times as *Yahweh*.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Theme. Longing for communion with God in the temple. A pilgrim song.

I. *Title.* **set to the Gittith**: see on Ps. lxxxi, *Title.*

sons of Korah. Concerning the man Korah and the guild of Korahites see p. 37 f. and vol. i. p. 220. There was a Korahite hymn-book, one that arose in the guild of that name, and those Psalms which have 'Korahites' ('Sons of Korah') in the title formed part of that hymn-book.

II. *Contents.* It is a pilgrim song.

(1) Just entering Jerusalem, with the temple in sight, the

O LORD of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the 2
LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, 3

---

pilgrim expresses his longing for the temple, God's house, where rest is to be found (verses 1-4).

(2) Within Jerusalem, perhaps within the temple courts, he tells of the happiness of those who seek unto God (verses 5-8).

(3) The joy obtained in the worship of Jehovah (verses 9-12).

The language and thought of Pss. 42 f. (one Psalm originally) and of the present Psalm are much alike, and they have, many think, one author and one date.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm has been traced to many periods from David's day (Hengstenberg, Delitzsch) to the Maccabean age (Hitzig, Duhm). The temple was standing, and it had two altars (verse 3), which prove that the Psalm is post-exilic (see on verse 3): but nothing more definite than that can be said with any certainty. Whenever composed, this Psalm is one of the sweetest and most artistic in the Psalter.

Like Pss. xlii f. the present Psalm makes personal communion with God consist too exclusively of external worship at the temple, but the former is by no means lost in the latter, and throughout this triad of Psalms there breathes a blessed intimacy with God not unworthy of the greatest mystics.

1 f. *The Pilgrim's longing for the temple.*

1. amiable: rather, 'lovely' or 'dear.' 'Amiable' is now used of persons, never of things.

tabernacles: render, 'dwelling': the plural is used because the temple building (the house) and its courts are embraced. The Hebrew word is not that used for the booths dwelt in during the feast of Tabernacles: see on lxxviii. 60.

2. longeth: the LXX uses the same word here that Paul employs for the spirit's longing after 'the habitation which is from heaven.' 2 Cor. v. 2.

fainteth: languishes, pines away: see on cxix. 81.

My heart and my flesh=my whole being: the heart and flesh are mentioned together in xvi. 9, xxxi. 10, lxiii. 2, lxxiii. 26.

cry out: see on lxxxi. 1 ('sing aloud').

living God: besides here only in xlii. 2.

3 f. *Those who dwell in God's house are happy.*

3. The sense of the verse is:—'As the sparrow and the swallow have nests in which they rest and find comfort, so have I in the

And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay
her young,
Even thine altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King, and my God.
4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:
They will be still praising thee. [Selah
5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;

---

temple, my resting-place, my joy.' The end of the verse seems to have dropped out: or perhaps the poet leaves it to be supplied by the reader. On account of the omission of such words as '(Thine altars, &c.) are my joyous abode,' it used to be thought that the birds are pictured as making their nests on the roofs, &c. of the temple. The force of the words was then taken to be—'The birds even share my longing to be associated with Thy house.' But the care with which the temple buildings were cleansed makes it impossible to think of birds building nests in any part of the sacred structure.

sparrow: The Hebrew word stands for any small bird.

swallow: read 'dwelling' (*dor* for *deror*): 'Yea the little bird has found its home and dwelling—a nest for herself,' &c. So Duhm.

altars: there was but one altar in the temple of Solomon and in that sketched by Ezekiel (the table of Shewbread can be hardly reckoned as an altar). But in the later literature mention is made of two altars, the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense (Golden altar): see Num. iii. 31 (P), and 1 Macc. i. 21. The occurrence of the plural here proves that the Psalm is post-exilic. Perhaps there is on this verse an implied allusion to the altar as an asylum, a place of safety: see Exod. xxi. 13 f.

O LORD of hosts, &c.: note the heaping up of names for God, and cf. l. 1.

4. Blessed: i. e. 'happy' in the external sense—'well situated,' 'prosperous': so the Greek word *makarios* (Matt. v. 3–11) and the Latin *beatus*. Another Hebrew word (*baruk*) rendered 'blessed' has the same literal sense as the English word and as the Latin *benedictus*.

They will be still praising thee: better, 'They will continue to praise thee.'

5–8. *Having reached Jerusalem, the pilgrim sings of the happiness of those who appear before God to worship Him.*

5. Blessed: see on verse 4; 'happy' (without the hap) would be nearer the original.

In whose heart are the high ways *to Zion*.
Passing through the valley of Weeping they make it a 6
place of springs;
Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength, 7
Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.
O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: 8
Give ear, O God of Jacob. [Selah

whose strength: read, 'whose refuge': a letter (*m*) has fallen out of the Hebrew through the coming together of two identical letters. So apparently the LXX and Pesh.

In whose heart are the high ways *to Zion*: Heb. 'in whose heart (are) highways,' out of which no ingenuity can make sense. The usual interpretation is: 'who have set their minds on the (three) annual pilgrimages,' but the Hebrew word so translated never means pilgrimages. Read for this word 'confidence' (found in Job iv. 6) and render: 'in whose heart there is confidence' (plural of intensity): this suits the parallelism well.

6. Render: 'Who passing through (or crossing) the valley of Baka (= balsam) He makes it a place of springs: yea, the early rain covers it with pools.'

The Hebrew word *baka* does not mean **Weeping:** it is the name of a balsam-tree which grows in very dry places only. God makes for His people waterless valleys to abound with water.

they make it: better change one vowel and read with LXX 'He makes it.'

early rain: that which follows the seed sowing and begins about November. See Joel ii. 23. The LXX, Pesh. render 'lawgiver,' an impossible sense here, though, perhaps, allowed by the Hebrew. Targ., Jero. have 'teacher,' a very common meaning of the Heb. word.

blessings: read 'pools,' changing one vowel only. In the waterless balsam valley those who look to Jehovah find fresh fountains and refreshing pools.

7. from strength to strength: instead of losing strength on the journey, as might have been expected, they become ever stronger: see Isa. xl. 13.

Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion: read with some vowel change and one consonant change, 'They see God (even) God in Zion.' The LXX and Pesh. support this change indirectly. The Massorites here and elsewhere tried to avoid the expression 'seeing God.'

9 Behold, O God our shield,
And look upon the face of thine anointed.
10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and a shield:
The LORD will give grace and glory:
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts,
Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

85 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land:

9–12. *The joy felt in the worship of Jehovah.*

9. Render, as in the R. V. marg., 'Behold our shield, O God.' 'Our shield' and 'thine anointed' are parallel words. The King is called a shield in lxxxix. 19, where 'our shield' and 'our king' stand in parallelism to each other.

10. Probably this verse is a liturgical addition.

For: render, 'surely.'

a day: a feast day seems meant. The LXX, Pesh., P. B. V. have 'one day.'

a thousand: i. e. a thousand days elsewhere.

I had rather be a doorkeeper: better, 'I had rather be on the threshold in God's house than to dwell in (= inside) the tents of wickedness.'

11. sun: only here in the O. T. is God compared to the sun, probably on account of the prevalence of sun worship. Perhaps we should read 'battlement,' the word for 'sun' with a feminine ending, found in Isa. liv. 12 (R. V. 'pinnacle'), so called because it reflected the sun's rays: 'battlement' and 'shield' would go well together.

PSALM LXXXV.

Theme. Prayer for a restoration of favour.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for a return of prosperity (verses 1–7).

In 1–3 Jehovah's mercies in the past are recalled.

In 4–7 Prayer is offered that the former prosperity may return.

(2) Strong confidence in the issue of the prayer (verses 8–13).

Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, 2
Thou hast covered all their sin. [Selah
Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: 3
Thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.
Turn us, O God of our salvation, 4
And cause thine indignation toward us to cease.
Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? 5

According to Jewish tradition 1–7 was said or sung by the people, 8–13 by the priests.

It is best to translate the verbs in verses 1–3 as pluperfects (Ewald) and not as English perfects (E. VV.), and still less as precatives (Smend, Cheyne (2) &c.) expressing a wish: it is doubtful whether the 'precative perf.' exists in Hebrew.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Some period of national suffering is implied in the Psalm, but whether that was due to the Samaritan or Syrian persecution or to some other cause we have no means of determining.

1–3. *Jehovah's former mercies recalled.*

1. thou hast been: render, 'hadst been': so render all the verbs in verses 1–3; see under *Contents.*

brought back the captivity: render: 'Thou hast restored the fortunes.' So the expression has been explained since Ewald's time. In Job xlii. 10 it can mean nothing else. There is no necessary reference in the words, properly interpreted, to the Exile.

2. forgiven: *lit.* 'lifted up,' as if a burden; so Ps. xxii. 5.

iniquity: sin regarded as a perversion of what is right.

covered: so that it cannot be seen; see Neh. iii. 37.

sin: the Hebrew and the corresponding Greek words denote a missing of the mark. Both these words for sin meet in xxii. 5.

3. taken away (all thy wrath): Heb. 'gathered in,' 'drawn back' (after it had gone forth); cf. civ. 29; 1 Sam. xiv. 19; Joel iv. 15.

Thou hast turned . . . anger: render: 'Thou hast turned away from the heat of thy anger.' So LXX, Jero. The Hebrew verb is often intransitive as in Ezek. xiv. 6, xviii. 30, 32. The Pesh. drops the 'from,' and is followed by Schrader and Duhm, 'Thou hadst turned away the heat of thy anger.'

4–7. *Prayer for the return of former favour.*

Turn us: render, 'return we entreat thee' (changing the last syllable—*nu* to *na*).

Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
6 Wilt thou not quicken us again:
That thy people may rejoice in thee?
7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD,
And grant us thy salvation.
8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak:
For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints:
But let them not turn again to folly.
9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him;
That glory may dwell in our land.
10 Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
11 Truth springeth out of the earth;

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6. Render: 'Mayest thou, O God, once more revive us,' &c. Only one word in Hebrew (the first) needs changing, and in that only the order of the letters.

quicken: see on lxxx. 18.

8-13. *Confidence in the issue of the prayer.*

8. Render: 'Let me hear (listen to) what Jehovah says: is it not that He speaks peace towards His people and towards His favoured ones, and hope for them that turn' (to Him)? Numerous changes in the text are required to justify this translation, but with very few exceptions the consonants are the same.

saints: better, 'favoured ones': see on lxxix. 2.

But let them not turn again to folly: a singular break in the run of the clauses, more manifest in the Hebrew than in the English. Read: 'and to those who turn their heart to Him': so the LXX, Baethgen. The requisite changes in the Hebrew consonants are unimportant.

9. glory: i. e. the glory of God.

10. Mercy and truth: rather, 'loving kindness' (on God's part) 'and faithfulness' (on man's). God's loving delivering hand never fails when man is true to Him, turning aside from idols.

Righteousness: in the sense of Isa. xl-lxvi. His faithfulness to deliver.

peace: man's well-being; cf. the greeting rendered in Hellenistic Greek as in English too narrowly by 'Peace to you.'

11. Truth: i. e. (man's) faithfulness towards God: this is human, grows out of the earth, i. e. in men's hearts.

righteousness: rather, (God's) faithfulness to give as in verse 10; this looks down from heaven.

And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.
Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; 12
And our land shall yield her increase.
Righteousness shall go before him; 13
And shall make his footsteps a way *to walk in*.

A Prayer of David. **86**

Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and answer me; 1

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12. Note the connexion between moral conduct and external prosperity. If the people are faithful to Jehovah, He will make their land productive. See Isa. iv. 2; Zech. iii. 8: cf. Hag. i. 10 f.

13. This verse is of uncertain interpretation; see the larger commentaries. The likeliest sense is conveyed in the following free rendering: 'His faithfulness to deliver goes before Him: and it makes a path for Him to walk in': i.e. this faithfulness is present wherever Jehovah is, and it is the norm according to which He acts.

PSALM LXXXVI.

Theme. Petitions for pity, help, guidance, and protection.

I. *Title.* This is the only 'David' Psalm in Book III.

Prayer: the Hebrew word (found at the close of Ps. lxxii) means primarily an appeal to God to protect the wronged against wrongdoers. The Psalms having this word in the title (xvii, lxxxvi, cii, cxlii) formed originally a group.

II. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for pity and help (verses 1–7).
(2) Acknowledgement of Jehovah's incomparableness (verses 8–10).
(3) Prayer for guidance (verses 11–13).
(4) Prayer for protection (verses 14–17).
This Psalm is a mosaic made up of citations from different parts of the O. T., and it had no doubt a liturgical origin.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of the Psalm on other scriptures proves that it is of late date, certainly post-exilic, but beyond that the Psalm does not justify us in going.

1–7. *Prayer for pity and help: each petition is supported by a reason.*

1 f. Render: 'Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and answer me, O thou my God (from verse 2), For I am afflicted and poor:
2. O keep my soul (=me), for I am the object of thy loving-kindness: save thy servant who' (=because he) 'trusts in thee.'

Bow down thine ear: a common formula in prayer: see xvii. 6, xxxi. 32; Prov. xxii. 17; Isa. xxxvii. 17.

For I am poor and needy.
2 Preserve my soul; for I am godly:
O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.
3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord;
For unto thee do I cry all the day long.
4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant;
For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive,
And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer;
And hearken unto the voice of my supplications.
7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee;
For thou wilt answer me.
8 There is none like unto thee among the gods, O Lord;

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poor and needy: from xl. 17 (lxx. 5), see lxxxii. 4, cix. 22, and cf. xxv. 16, lxxxii. 4; translate, 'afflicted and needy': see on lxxxii. 3 f. Literal poverty is hardly meant.

2. thy servant: the word 'servant' is often used in Hebrew in polite speech for the personal pronoun: thus 'thy servant,' 1st pers. sing. = I or me, Gen. xviii. 3; 1 Sam. xx. 7 f.; thy 'servants' = we, Gen. xlii. 11; Isa. xxxvi. 11. It is specially used in addressing a superior, as in prayer to God, so here and often: see verses 4, 16, lxxxix. 50, xc. 13, cii. 14, 28. See also on lxxviii. 70: cf. the English 'your obedient, humble, &c. servant.'

3. See lvii. 1 f.: cf. xxx. 8, 10.

Be merciful: rather, 'Be gracious,' 'show favour.'

4. See xc. 15, 'gladden us' (same Hebrew word as here): cf. li. 8 ('satisfy us'—based on corrected text—'with joy and gladness').

4b is based on xxv. 1.

thy servant: see on verse 2.

5. See cxxx. 4, and Exod. xxxiv. 6 f. The latter seems to be the source used, though the words are changed.

6. See v. 2, lv. 1 f., xxviii. 2: cf. cxxx. 2.

supplications: *lit.* prayers for favour: a noun formed from the verb in verse 3.

7. See xvii. 6, lxxvii. 2, cxx. 1 f.

8–10. *Incomparableness of Jehovah.*

8. See Exod. xv. 11. The existence of heathen gods is

Neither *are there any works* like unto thy works.
All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship 9
before thee, O Lord;
And they shall glorify thy name.
For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: 10
Thou art God alone.
Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: 11
Unite my heart to fear thy name.
I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart; 12
And I will glorify thy name for evermore.
For great is thy mercy toward me; 13
And thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest pit.

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assumed, though Jehovah is above them all, and in the end will alone be worshipped (verse 9).

9. See xxii. 27; and cf. Isa. xxiv. 15. Note the Messianic ring of the verse. In the good time of Jehovah He alone will be worshipped from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

10. See lxxii. 18, lxxvii. 13 f., lxxxiii. 18; Exod. xv. 11.

11–13. *Prayer for guidance.*

11. Unite my heart: i. e. make it one and undivided: see Jer. xxxii. 39. But we must read (changing but one consonant), 'Let my heart (=me) be joined to those who fear Thy name.' The LXX, Pesh., followed by many moderns, read 'Let my heart rejoice,' &c., a trivial change in the vowels of the verb: cf. Job iii. 6.

12. See ix. 1.

13. See lvii. 16, lvi. 13 (=cxvi. 8); Deut. xxxii. 22: cf. Sir. li. 6.

the lowest pit: see Deut. xxxii. 22: Heb. 'Sheol (which is) under' or 'below.' Even if the adjective has the force of the superlative (='lowest'), as Klostermann and most moderns hold, the description applies to Sheol as a whole and not to a part of it, that part where the wicked are punished. Sheol is thought of as the opposite of the upper regions of light and life: see Job xi. 8; Amos ix. 2. It is the place to which all departed spirits or personalities go, good and bad: it does not correspond to our hell, purgatory, or heaven. 'To deliver from Sheol'=to save from death. The word and the ideas conveyed by it are taken over from Semitic heathenism, though later Jewish eschatology read other ideas into the word. See Introduction, p. 15 ff.

14 O God, the proud are risen up against me,
And the congregation of violent men have sought after my soul,
And have not set thee before them.
15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me;
Give thy strength unto thy servant,
And save the son of thine handmaid.
17 Shew me a token for good;
That they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed,
Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

87 A Psalm of the sons of Korah; a Song.
1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.

The words in verse 13 could hardly have been uttered by the community. The Psalm expresses individual experience.

14–17. *Prayer for protection against enemies.*

14. This verse is almost *verbatim* from liv. 3.

15. Taken *verbatim* from Exod. xxxiv. 6. God is very different from the Psalmist's insolent and bloodthirsty foes.

16. O turn, &c.: taken from xxv. 16.

have mercy: 'be gracious': 'show free unmerited favour' (as in verse 3).

thy servant: see cxvi. 16. A servant has some claim upon the consideration of his master: the Psalmist uses this argument to drive home his petition; see on verse 2.

the son of thine handmaid: a verbal variation of **servant** for the sake of the parallelism, and having the same meaning. 'A son of a female servant' means simply one belonging to the servant class: see on lxxix. 11. The fanciful ideas which Delitzsch and others have read into the words have no sound basis.

17. token: a sign: some visible, unmistakable sign of the Divine favour; see Ezra viii. 22; Neh. v. 19, xiii. 31; Jer. xxiv. 6.

That they which hate me, &c.: see xl. 3, vi. 10.

PSALM LXXXVII.

Theme. Zion the metropolis of Jehovah's kingdom.

The LORD loveth the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob. 2

I. *Contents.* The Psalm has two main parts, each ending with 'selah,' followed by a concluding verse.

(1) Zion, Jehovah's favoured city (verses 1–3).

(2) Zion to be the metropolis of God's kingdom throughout the world. All nations to be incorporated into this kingdom (verses 4–6).

(3) The exultation in Jerusalem of those who love her (verse 7).

We appear to have here a Psalm of the scattered Jews, composed by one of themselves for use in their synagogues. Under the stress of Persian and Syrian persecutions large bodies of Jews had been forced to make their homes in far-off lands. From the time of Alexander the Great (d. B.C. 323), when the Jewish nation came into contact with Greek civilization, emigration of Jews into Egypt, Asia Minor, Babylon, Greece, &c., went on at a rapid rate. Were the Jews thus separated from Fatherland to be shut out from the Zion kingdom? Nay, that kingdom was to be extended so as to take in faithful Israelites of all lands. Those of them who had been born in the countries named were yet to be reckoned as born into the kingdom of God.

The resemblances in thought and in language between this Psalm and Isa. xl–lxvi seem to imply that the latter arose out of the same set of conditions.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm seems to be a product either of the late Persian or of the Maccabean period. The parallelism presented by the Psalm to writings of the former connect it with that period rather than with the age of the Maccabees. Many, however, think that the subject of the Psalm is the conversion of the Gentiles, and date it about B.C. 500, soon after the return from Babylon.

1–3. *Zion Jehovah's favoured city.*

1. Render verses 1 f.: 'Jehovah's foundation is upon holy mountains: 2. Jehovah loves the gates of Zion more than all the gates of Jacob.'

His foundation: the Hebrew for 'His' is a corruption of Jehovah: no noun to which 'his' can refer has occurred. Jehovah's foundation means that which He has laid the foundation of, i. e. the temple.

2. the gates of Zion: the word **gates** often stands for city: see cxxii. 2, &c.

the dwellings of Jacob: i. e. the foreign cities in which the Jews of the Diaspora dwelt, Alexandria, Tyre, &c.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God. [Selah
4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among
them that know me:
Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia;
This one was born there.
5 Yea, of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was
born in her;
And the Most High himself shall establish her.
6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the peoples,
This one was born there. [Selah

3. Changing the vowels of one word ('speaks' for 'are spoken') render: 'Glorious things does He speak concerning thee, O city of God.'

This rendering better introduces the oracle contained in verses 4–6.

4–6. *The oracle of Jehovah.*

The Jews of the Diaspora will be received and recognized as constituents of the kingdom whose centre is Zion.

4. The proper names in this verse represent the scattered Jews settled in the localities named. These are now recognized by Jehovah Himself as members of the theocracy.

Rahab: *lit.* 'haughtiness,' a name for Egypt here and in Isa. xxx. 7, a genuine Isaianic passage. Originally it was one of the names of the primaeval monster Tiamat whom Marduk conquered, changing Chaos to Kosmos, see on lxxiv. 13 f. and lxxxix. 10. The name has this last sense in Isa. li. 9 and Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12, see Gunkel, *Chaos*, &c. p. 38.

5. The present Hebrew text yields no suitable meaning. If with the LXX we insert the word 'mother,' and if, besides, we omit the initial letter of the first verb, which letter is very small and might well have been written in error for a copyist's blot, we obtain the following excellent sense: 'But each one calls Zion mother, and in it (Zion) was each one born.' So Wellhausen and Duhm. The accidental falling out of the word='mother' would be helped by the fact that the same (two) letters occur in the verb next to it.

This one and that one: Heb. 'each one' or 'every one.'

6. When Jehovah will make a register of His people He will say of each foreign-born faithful Jew—This one, though physically born in some far-off land, shall be reckoned as a Zion-born man, a heir of Jehovah's covenant blessing.

They that sing as well as they that dance *shall say*, 7
All my fountains are in thee.

A Song, a Psalm of the sons of Korah; for the Chief Musician; 88
set to Mahalath Leannoth. Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, the God of my salvation, 1

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7. The rejoicing of those who love Zion.
Render: 'But they sing as they dance:
All my springs are in thee.'

The text is, however, very uncertain.

The subject (**they**) of the verbs **sing** and **dance** is indefinite; there is singing in Jerusalem accompanied by dancing, and the theme of the singing is 'The sources of our joy are in thee'—(Zion), see Isa. xii. 3: cf. xxxvi. 9f., lxxxiv. 6. Dancing was a part of worship, see xxvi. 6 and 2 Sam. vi. 16.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

Theme. The prayer of one in deep distress.
'The gloomiest of all the plaintive Psalms' (Delitzsch).

I. *Title.* In every other case the words 'For the chief musician' (see vol. i. p. 14) occupy the first place in the title. For this and other reasons the words that go before are to be rejected as mere repetition of the title to Ps. lxxxvii. Thirtle gets over the difficulty by attaching the rest of the title to the preceding Psalm. Ps. lxxxvii is then twice (beginning and end) described as 'a Psalm of the Korahites.'

Mahalath Leannoth: the name of the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung: cf. title of Ps. liii.

Heman the Ezrahite: see Introduction to Ps. lxxiii. *Asaph Psalms.* The term Ezrahite is, however, wrongly applied to Heman and also to Ethan (Ps. lxxxix).

II. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist describes his miserable condition: near to death: forsaken of friends (verses 1–9).
(2) He prays to be saved from death on the ground that the dead cannot praise Jehovah (verses 10–13).
(3) He makes a pathetic appeal to Jehovah. Why has He withdrawn His countenance, and thus allowed him to be overwhelmed with terrors? (verses 14–18).

This Psalm has many noteworthy features. It is the saddest in the Psalter, sadder even than Pss. vii, xxii, and xxxi, for in these three light does break in at the last.

It is an individual that suffers and speaks: make it a song of Israel in Babylon, and the force of this song is gone. The long

I have cried day and night before thee :
2 Let my prayer enter into thy presence ;
Incline thine ear unto my cry :
3 For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.
4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit ;
I am as a man that hath no help :
5 Cast off among the dead,

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drawn wail of this Psalm vividly recalls Job's most touching complaints.

Olshausen, Cheyne (2), &c. hold that the close of the Psalm has been lost : it is this lost part which, say they, contained the hope and faith with which such Psalms close.

Hengstenberg and Kay would join this Psalm to the next, making one long Psalm of the two.

The suffering of the Psalmist was in the first instance physical, though that brought on feelings of despair, harder to bear than the physical pain.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The author lived at a time when God was thought to have forsaken the nation, for it is to this forsaking that he ascribes his own sickness. There were many periods in the nation's history in which this thought was uppermost, and it is impossible to point to any one and to say with any confidence, that is the period in which this Psalm was written.

1 f. *Prayer to be heard and helped.*

1. Render : 'Jehovah my God I cry (to thee) for help by day, (and) I cry by night before thee.'

The M. T. gives no admissible sense, but by making a very few trivial changes in the Hebrew we get good grammar and sense ; see above translation.

the God of my salvation : no change in the Hebrew consonants is required to yield the meaning : '(Jehovah) my God I cry for help.'

3–9. *The Psalmist describes his distress.*

3. Sheol : see on lxxxvi. 13. It is not the grave that is meant, but the home of departed spirits.

4. help : better, 'strength.'

5. Render : 'My soul (=I myself) is among the dead, Like the slain in the grave Whom thou rememberest no more, Seeing they are cut off by thy hand.'

Cast off : Hebrew and versions have 'free' (as a slave who is

Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more;
And they are cut off from thy hand.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, 6
In dark places, in the deeps.
Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, 7
And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. [Selah
Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me; 8
Thou hast made me an abomination unto them:
I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.
Mine eye wasteth away by reason of affliction: 9
I have called daily upon thee, O LORD,
I have spread forth my hands unto thee.
Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? 10

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set at liberty): the same Hebrew word has this sense in Job iii. 19: but in the latter it is a boon rejoiced in—in Sheol the slave is no longer tyrannized over. Here the condition described is one deplored. It is best to change one letter, and to render 'my soul': see above. Duhm reads 'Thou shuttest me up among the dead'—excellent in sense, but involving a greater change of text.

6. lowest pit: dark places: deeps: the Targ. takes these to be graphic pictures of the Exile in Babylon; see on lxxxvi. 13. For 'deeps' LXX, Pesh. have 'shadow of death' (='blackest gloom'); see xxiii. 4. The Hebrew word is once more, through Nöldeke's influence, regarded as a compound='the shadow' or 'gloom of death.'

7. Render: 'Thou hast laid thy fury upon me, And thou hast caused thy waves to come to meet me.'

lieth: the Hebrew verb is always elsewhere transitive. It is better to make a slight change and to render as above.

afflicted: read as in the above rendering, changing similar letters in the Hebrew.

8. He is abandoned by his friends: cf. Job xix. 13 f.

abomination: in Hebrew 'abominations': probably the plural of intensity: 'a great abomination.'

9. Mine eye, &c.: the eye soonest of any member tells the tale of sorrow; see vi. 7, xxxi. 9; Job xvii. 7.

10-13. *Prayer to be saved from death.*

That the shadowy denizens of Sheol can do nothing is the view

Shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee? [Selah
11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?
12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
13 But unto thee, O LORD, have I cried,
And in the morning shall my prayer come before thee.
14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul?
Why hidest thou thy face from me?
15 I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up:
While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.
16 Thy fierce wrath is gone over me;

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which meets us in later parts of the O. T.: see xciv. 17, cxv. 17; Job vii. 9, &c.: and also Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 41 ff. and 47 f.

The questions in verses 10-13 anticipate a negative answer.

10. Render: 'Canst thou perform wonders on behalf of the dead? Or can shades rise to praise thee?'

wonders: see on lxxviii. 4, where a cognate word occurs in the plural.

they that are deceased: better, 'shades': the word occurs in late Hebrew for the dead in Sheol: see Prov. ii. 18, &c.

arise: i. e. to praise, not return to life. 'Can these shades, as such, praise thee?'

11. Destruction: better retain the Hebrew word *Abaddon*, which is a synonym of *Sheol*; see Rev. ix. 11.

12. land of forgetfulness: the land where one forgets and is forgotten. The expression occurs only here; see Job xiv. 21.

13. Render: 'But as for me, unto thee, O Jehovah, cry I for help: Even in the morning does my prayer come to meet thee.'

in the morning: his first thoughts will be of thanks to God if only he is spared.

14-18. *Pathetic appeal to Jehovah. Why has He hidden His face?*

14. my soul: i. e. me (emphatic), see on lxxviii. 18.

15. Render: 'Afflicted am I and at the point of death' (*lit.* 'expiring') 'through pressure: I have borne thy terrors so that I am distracted.'

from my youth up: read, 'through pressure' (due to pain): the Hebrew words are easily confounded.

16. Thy fierce wrath: render: 'thy streams of wrath': the Hebrew word is plural; see xlii. 7.

Thy terrors have cut me off.
They came round about me like water all the day long ; 17
They compassed me about together.
Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, 18
And mine acquaintance into darkness.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. 89
I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever : 1

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18. And mine acquaintance into darkness: render: 'my acquaintances are darkness,' i. e. darkness takes the place of my friends. I lose the former and instead get the latter—a sorry exchange! see Job xvii. 14.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Theme. Prayer for a renewal of Jehovah's mercies.

I. *Title.* **Ethan the Ezrahite.** See on *Asaph Psalms*, pp. 37 f., and see also Introduction to Ps. lxxvii.

II. *Contents.* (1) Theme of the Psalm. The covenant made with David (2 Sam. vii) (verses 1–4).

(2) A song of praise to Jehovah the Creator and Governor of the world, the righteous and gracious God (verses 5–14).

(3) The privileges of Jehovah's people, happy and helped (verses 15–18).

(4) Fuller statement of the covenant made with David (see verses 1–4) (verses 19–37).

(5) Contrast between the ideal, as set forth in the covenant, and the actual state of the people (verses 38–45).

(6) Prayer that Jehovah may have regard to them, and that He may manifest to them the lovingkindness of past days (verses 46–51).

(7) Liturgical addition, closing Book III.

This Psalm stands in close connexion with Ps. cxxxii—see on that Psalm (*Contents*). In both Jehovah is entreated on the ground of the covenant made with David to be gracious to His people: but in the present Psalm there is unrelieved gloom: hope has gone except the glimmering rays which come from the covenant. In Ps. cxxxii there is hope and even confidence, for God has begun to be gracious.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm must be post-exilic, as it is based on the post-exilic piece 2 Sam. vii. 1 29. The expectation of the perpetual rule of the house of David did not arise in Israel until after the Exile, or at least until some time during the Exile.

With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to
all generations.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever;
Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen,

When the Southern kingdom had come to an end pious Israelites began to cast about as to the future of God's elect people. 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 formulates the hope by which the Jews sustained their faith in God and in their future. Literary and other considerations place it beyond doubt that 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 originated in post-exilic times (so the latest commentators), and this conclusion carries with it a post-exilic date for the present Psalm.

There were many periods of national distress after the return from Babylon which could serve as a background for this Psalm; note especially the Samaritan and the Syrian persecutions: but it is impossible to fix upon any one to the exclusion of the rest, though that has been largely done.

Many recent commentators (Olshausen, Bickell, &c.) hold that verses 1–18 (except perhaps 4 f.) is an independent poem, implying that the people are happy and prosperous, written perhaps by the same author (Bickell and Duhm) but at a different time. The reasons for this conclusion are purely subjective, and they are more than balanced by reasons in favour of the unity of the Psalm. There is in the whole a development and connectedness of thought which argue that it is one whole poem that we have here.

1–4. *The Covenant with David* (see 2 Sam. vii. 1–29).

1. mercies: kindnesses or kind acts. There is no implication of guilt in the word.

2. Render: 'For thou saidst, For ever shall kindness be built up: In the heavens shall my faithfulness be established.'

I have said: read with LXX. Pesh. 'Thou saidst.'

shall be built up: the verbs 'build' and 'establish' in this verse are suggested by their proper use in verse 4. God's loving-kindness is pictured as a building which becomes more and more manifest as stone is laid on stone.

shalt thou establish: rather with LXX, Sym., 'shall be established': no change of consonants is needed.

in the very heavens: *lit.* 'in the heavens—my faithfulness shall be established in them.' The thought is—in heaven far removed from the changes of the earth: cf. the 'hope . . . within the veil,' Heb. vi. 19: see cxix. 89. Or perhaps the meaning is 'with the stability and immutability of the heavens': see lxxii. 5, cxix. 90.

3 f. contain in brief the substance of the covenant made by

I have sworn unto David my servant;
Thy seed will I establish for ever, 4
And build up thy throne to all generations. [Selah
And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD; 5
Thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.
For who in the skies can be compared unto the LORD? 6
Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto the LORD,
A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones, 7
And to be feared above all them that are round about him?
O LORD God of hosts, 8
Who is a mighty one, like unto thee, O JAH?

Jehovah with David (2 Sam. vii. 1–29). These verses depend on the 'thou saidst' of verse 3, for they give Jehovah's words. The language of 2 Sam. vii is closely followed.

3. sworn: in 2 Sam. vii nothing is said of an oath made by God, see cxxxii. 11.

my servant: see on lxxviii. 50 and lxxxvi. 2.

5–18. *A beautiful hymn of praise in which the attributes of Jehovah's character are celebrated.*

5. Render: 'So let the heavens' (i. e. heavenly beings) 'praise thy wonderful acts, O Jehovah; Yea, (let) the assembly of the holy ones (praise thy wonderful acts).'

6. who in the skies, &c.: which of the gods represented by the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, &c., is comparable to Jehovah?

sons of the mighty: i. e. false gods. The word rendered 'mighty' means in the plural invariably the gods of the heathen, see Exod. xv. 11, &c. Cf. xxix. 1, lxxxii. 1 (see on). For the force of 'sons of' see on lxxix. 11.

7. Render: 'A God to be dreaded in the council of the holy ones, Great and terrible above all those round about Him.'

very terrible: omit 'very': it is the adjective = 'great' written in error with the fem. ending. The LXX connects with the following, translating as above.

holy ones: as in verse 5 'angels,' so also **them that are round about him.** It is possible that the council of gods in which Jehovah was supposed to preside is meant here and in verse 5: the epithetic 'holy' (ones) would be then applied ironically: see Introduction to Ps. lxxxii.

8. JAH: in Hebrew 'Yah,' an abbreviated form of *Yahweh* (Jehovah), due perhaps in the first instance to the shortened writing of the scribes. Though appearing in early Hebrew poetry (Exod. xv. 2) it is a later form than *Yahweh*, and this fact, together

And thy faithfulness is round about thee.
9 Thou rulest the pride of the sea:
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain;
Thou hast scattered thine enemies with the arm of thy strength.
11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine:
The world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.
12 The north and the south, thou hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in thy name.
13 Thou hast a mighty arm:
Strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.
14 Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of thy throne:
Mercy and truth go before thy face.

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with the occurrence of the fuller form in the Moabite stone, is against the supposition of Fried. Delitzsch and Hommel that the shorter name is the original one, the longer name being due, they say, to a desire to connect this Divine name with the Hebrew verb 'to be' (*hawah* = *hayah*); see on civ. 35.

9. Thou: in Hebrew emphatic = 'As for thee, thou,' &c.

sea: a reference to the sea monster slain by the supreme God. See on **Rahab** in the next verse.

10. Rahab: i. e. the monster of the ancient Semitic creation-myth, not Egypt; see on lxxiv. 13 f. and on lxxxvii. 4.

11 f. describe how Jehovah, having overcome the great foe of light and order, called into being a *kosmos* or well-arranged universe.

11. The world: *lit.* 'the productive earth,' not, as used to be thought (cf. LXX), 'the inhabited world.' The Hebrew word is always anarthrous, as though it were a proper noun.

12. Tabor and Hermon: standing for east and west, from the point of view of one writing in South Palestine.

13. arm: hand: right hand: all terms expressive of God's power in action. The terms are often used in the account of the Exodus to indicate what God did (Exod. xv. 6, 9, 12, 16).

14. Jehovah's rule is not only powerful (verse 13), it is also just.

judgement = righteousness in action. God's throne is based on the quality and practice of righteousness.

Mercy and truth, &c.: render: 'lovingkindness and faith-

Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound : 15
They walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.
In thy name do they rejoice all the day : 16
And in thy righteousness are they exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength : 17
And in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.
For our shield belongeth unto the LORD ; 18
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Then thou spakest in vision to thy saints, 19

---

fulness go before thee.' Wherever He is these qualities are: they are God's forerunners, His servants, His vassals; see xliii. 3, &c.

15–18. *The privileges of Jehovah's people.*

15. Blessed: i. e. 'happy': see on lxxxiv. 4.

joyful sound: the trumpet sound heard when the festivals were being celebrated; see lxxxi. 1.

in the light of thy countenance: i. e. in the enjoyment of thy favour; see iv. 6, and Num. vi. 25 f.

16. thy name = thy revealed character: so parallel to **thy righteousness.**

they rejoice: Heb. 'they exult.'

are they exalted: the Hebrew can hardly yield this translation. Better read, making unimportant changes in the Hebrew, 'they put forth ringing shouts of joy.' This is supported by parallelism.

17. the glory of their strength = the power in which they glory; see xliv. 6 ff.

And in thy favour, &c.: render: 'And through thy favour thou wilt exalt our horn.' This is the rendering backed by the uncorrected Hebrew text, the Targ., and Jero., and it falls in better with the context, where the second person is used concerning the exalting of the horn; see on lxxv. 4, and cf. verse 24.

18. shield: explained in the next clause to mean 'King'; see lxxxiv. 10. 'Our King, who is our defender, is one appointed by Jehovah.' The Psalm comes back now to the covenant with David.

19–37. *Expansion of what is said in verses* 1–4 *concerning the covenant with David.* We have in these verses a poetical amplification of the prophecy uttered by Nathan (see 2 Sam. vii. 5–17).

19. Then, at the time spoken of in 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 referred to

And saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen out of the people.
20 I have found David my servant;
With my holy oil have I anointed him:
21 With whom my hand shall be established;
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not exact upon him;
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
23 And I will beat down his adversaries before him,
And smite them that hate him.
24 But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him;
And in my name shall his horn be exalted.
25 I will set his hand also on the sea,

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in verses 1–4. See especially 2 Sam. vii. 8–16. This word at least seems to imply the intervention of verses 5–18.

thy saints: 'thy favoured ones,' see on lxxix. 2.

help: read 'crown' (*'ezer* for *'ezer*); the M. T. makes no sense.

one chosen: better, 'a young warrior'—no change in the Hebrew; see Amos iv. 10, &c.

20. I have found: read, 'I have consecrated,' and see 1 Kings xiii. 13 for the phrase thus obtained.

(David) **my servant**: a title of respect: see on lxxviii. 70.

anointed: see 1 Sam. ix. 16, &c. Kings and priests were anointed for their office: see pp. 7 f.

21. my hand: **Mine arm** = 'my power': see on verse 13.

shall be established: shall be firmly fixed; shall not depart from him, i. e. my power will not fail him.

22. shall not exact upon him: i. e. shall not oppress him with the ruthless cruelty of a heartless creditor: so the LXX, the Rabbis, Calvin, Hupfeld, &c. Most moderns, however, derive from a verb with the same letters (one may be different), meaning 'to deceive': then 'to overtake unawares' (see lv. 16).

The second part of the verse is taken almost *verbatim* from 2 Sam. vii. 10; cf. 2 Sam. iii. 24.

the son of wickedness: better, 'the wicked man'; see on lxxix. 11.

23. beat down: Heb. 'cut in pieces.'

24. mercy: better, 'lovingkindness.'

25. sea = the Mediterranean, i. e. the west.

And his right hand on the rivers.
He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, 26
My God, and the rock of my salvation.
I also will make him *my* firstborn, 27
The highest of the kings of the earth.
My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, 28
And my covenant shall stand fast with him.
His seed also will I make to endure for ever, 29
And his throne as the days of heaven.
If his children forsake my law, 30
And walk not in my judgements ;

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rivers = the Euphrates and its canals, i. e. the east. These were the recognized boundaries of the Holy Land : see lxxii. 8, &c.

26. In 2 Sam. vii. 14 Jehovah promises David to be a Father to his son Solomon. Here He promises to be a Father to David himself. In Ps. ii the promise is applied to the relationship between Jehovah and the Messiah.

My God, and the rock of my salvation : see xviii. 2 ; Deut. xxxii. 15.

27. firstborn : i. e. chief among kings. Israel is also spoken of as God's firstborn : see Exod. iv. 22, &c. Hitzig holds that 'David' in this Psalm denotes the anointed nation.

The highest : of kings. The word is often applied to God : see lxxiii. 11, &c.

28–37. *Permanence of the covenant.* 2 Sam. vii. 13–16.

28. mercy : 'lovingkindness.'

29. seed = descendants who shall succeed him on the throne.

as the days of heaven : 'as long as the heaven endures,' i. e. for ever. In its original place—Deut. xi. 21—the phrase is used of Israel : another application to David of what was first said of the nation. For the phrase see lxxii. 5, 7, 17 ; Job xiv. 12.

30–34. An amplification of 2 Sam. vii. 14 f. When David's descendants on the throne prove unfaithful to God, even then will God be faithful to the covenant.

Verses 30 f. constitute the protasis and 32 f. the apodosis of a long sentence.

30. his children : Heb. 'sons,' i e. those of his descendants who shall succeed him as king.

judgements : rather, 'ordinances' : see Introduction to Ps. cxix, p. 254.

31 If they break my statutes,
And keep not my commandments;
32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
33 But my mercy will I not utterly take from him,
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
34 My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
35 Once have I sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie unto David;
36 His seed shall endure for ever,
And his throne as the sun before me.
37 It shall be established for ever as the moon,
And *as* the faithful witness in the sky. [Selah

38 But thou hast cast off and rejected,

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32. In 2 Sam. vii. 14 for **rod** and **stripes** we have 'the rod of men,' 'the stripes of men,' i. e. Jehovah will inflict such chastisement as earthly fathers do when their children go wrong. See Hos. vi. 7; Job xxxi. 33, &c.

33. mercy = 'lovingkindness.'

Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: Heb. 'Nor will I be false in my faithfulness.'

35. sworn: see on verse 3.

by my holiness: see lx. 6, Amos iv. 26; when God promises or makes an oath by His holiness it is implied that the certainty of execution is vouched for by His character.

36. his throne: the royal office, not the material object.

as the sun: in duration; see on verse 29.

37. Render: 'It' (=his throne, see 2 Sam. vii. 16) 'shall be made firm' (='lasting') 'as the moon for ever: and for ever as the sky shall it be sure.'

witness: read, 'for ever,' altering one vowel.

in the sky: better, 'as the sky': the particles for 'in' and 'as' are written almost exactly alike, and are constantly confounded as here.

38–45. *Contrast between the ideal held out in the covenant with David and the actual state of the people.*

38. But thou: read 'now' changing the first consonant into one closely resembling it.

Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.
Thou hast abhorred the covenant of thy servant: 39
Thou hast profaned his crown *even* to the ground.
Thou hast broken down all his hedges; 40
Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.
All that pass by the way spoil him: 41
He is become a reproach to his neighbours.
Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries; 42
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
Yea, thou turnest back the edge of his sword, 43
And hast not made him to stand in the battle.
Thou hast made his brightness to cease, 44
And cast his throne down to the ground.
The days of his youth hast thou shortened: 45
Thou hast covered him with shame. [Selah

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39. abhorred: read, 'shaken off,' changing the middle consonant.

even **to the ground:** i.e. by casting it (the crown) to the ground. See on lxxiv. 7.

40. What is said in 40[a] of the king is in lxxx. 12 said of the nation. But in this Psalm the distinction between the king and people seems often a vanishing one.

41[b] is from lxxix. 4: cf. xliv. 13.

41. All that pass by the way: the hordes that invade the country or pass through it towards some other country—Syria or Egypt, &c.

43. thou turnest back, &c. The sense is: 'Thou dost not allow his sword to slay one foe. When its edge is directed towards the enemy thou makest it return without having wrought any execution.' The idea of blunting the edge is not in the Hebrew.

Perhaps with Targ., Graetz, &c. we should read, 'Thou turnest back his sword,' which yields the same sense and is simpler.

44. Render: 'Thou hast taken away the sceptre from his hand,' &c. The changes in the Hebrew necessary for this are few and unimportant.

45. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: it is difficult to make these words apply to David, for he died in a good old age.

46 How long, O LORD, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?
How long shall thy wrath burn like fire?
47 O remember how short my time is:
For what vanity hast thou created all the children of men!
48 What man is he that shall live and not see death,
That shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? [Selah
49 Lord, where are thy former mercies,
Which thou swarest unto David in thy faithfulness?
50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants;
How I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the
mighty peoples;

46–51. *The Psalmist pleads with Jehovah to put away His anger.*

46. This verse is almost *verbatim* as in lxxix. 5: render: 'How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself? Will thy hot anger burn like fire for ever?'

47. Render: 'Remember, O Lord, what kind of thing (this) passing life is! For what vain purpose hast thou created human beings?'

The word 'Lord' has, by a copyist's negligence, been corrupted to the first personal pronoun 'I,' which here is untranslatable. The mistake is due to the dropping of one letter (*d*).

children of men: Heb. 'sons of men,' i.e. men, human beings; see on lxxix. 11.

48. Render: 'Who is the man that will live (on) without seeing (experiencing) death, That shall deliver himself from the power of Sheol?'

Sheol: see on lxxxvi. 13.

49. former mercies: rather, 'former lovingkindnesses' (as in A. V.).

Which thou swarest: see on verse 3.

50f. Jehovah is Himself dishonoured by the continuance of Israel's disasters.

50. Render: 'Remember, O Lord, the reproach of' (='hurled against') 'thy servant: How I bear' (lit. 'my bearing') 'in my bosom the contumely of the peoples.'

servants: read 'servant' (sing.).

***the reproach of* all the mighty peoples:** the italicized words are not in the Hebrew. The remaining Hebrew words have consonants greatly resembling those of the Hebrew word for 'contumely' (*Kelimma*), and we must no doubt restore this word as original.

Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD, 51
Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

Blessed be the LORD for evermore. 52
Amen, and Amen.

BOOK IV.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God. **90**

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place 1

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51. footsteps: they follow him, are at his heels with taunts and gibes as to his God and his religion. Cf. xvii. 11; Jer. xii. 6 (R. V.).

52. This verse is not a part of the Psalm, but a closing doxology to Book III (73–89) added by one of the editors of the present collection.

BOOKS IV AND V.

The Psalms in these two books (xc–cvi and cvii–cl) formed originally one collection, as is true of those in Books II and III, though the evidence in the latter case is more abundant and convincing. The doxology at the end of Ps. cvi was added from 1 Chron. xvi. 36 after the division into five books had taken place. Pss. cv–vii are so allied in form and thought that they must from the first have stood together. It was no doubt the arrangement of the national law book into 'five-fifths' that led to a corresponding division of the national hymn-book. Moreover, there are Elohistic and Yahwistic Psalms as there are Elohistic and Yahwistic parts of the Pentateuch.

In the sixty-one Psalms of these books 'Yahweh' occurs thirty-three times, 'Elohim' seven times. Of the latter, six are in Ps. cviii (see on), which is made up of extracts from two Elohistic Psalms and an editorial introduction. The other Psalm in these books in which 'Elohim' is found (cxliv) is also composite.

There are some common features in Pss. xc–cl which suggest that they formed at one time a single collection, such as the large number of 'orphan' (i. e. titleless) and liturgical Psalms, the miscellaneous character of the Psalms, &c.: see the larger commentaries.

The following are the principal groups in Books IV and V.

(1) The David Psalms—fifteen in number (all in Book V).

In all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,

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(2) The 'Songs of the Going up' ('Song of degrees'). Pss. cxx–cxxxiv.
(3) The Theocratic Psalms xciii–c (except xciv).
(4) The 'Hodu' (='O give thanks') Psalms, cv–vii and cxxxvi.
(5) The Hallelujah Psalms. See *Hallelujah Psalms*, p. 226 f.

Psalm XC.

Theme. Jehovah the unchanging, the refuge of changing and erring man.

I. *Title.* The name **Moses** appears in the title probably on account of the similarity between the teaching of the Psalm and that of portions of the Pentateuch, the latter being the work of Moses according to Jewish tradition.

II. *Contents.* (1) The eternity of God contrasted with the frailty and brevity of human life (verses 1–6).
(2) The sorrow of man's short life due to God's anger, which is itself due to man's sin (verses 7–10).
(3) Prayer for wisdom to realize the brevity of life, and for Divine satisfaction (verses 11–17).

III. *Authorship and Date.* The resemblances between this Psalm and Deut. xxxii make it likely that they are contemporary or nearly so. Perhaps the dashing to the ground of the hopes of the nation in B. C. 609 by the death of good king Josiah was the immediate occasion that called forth the Psalm. Dillmann (in class) held that the Psalm arose in the Northern kingdom in the reign of Ahab, when Ben-hadad invested Samaria (about B. C. 857), see 1 Kings xx; but the Deuteronomic teaching of the Psalm excludes this hypothesis. as also Ewald's similar view. Later dates (Maccabean, &c.) have been defended by Hitzig and others.
Notwithstanding the attacks upon the unity of the Psalm made by many recent critics the Psalm itself stands well together, and has no clear traces of being composite. Of course the connectedness of the thought may be due to good editing: Gunkel and others deny this connectedness.

1-6. *God's eternity and man's evanescence contrasted.*
Verses 1-12 constitute an independent poem according to Duhm.
1. Lord: the Hebrew word used here (*adonai*) is that which the Jews read instead of Jehovah (*Yahweh*): the vowels of this word have been inserted in the form represented by 'Jehovah.'
dwelling place: so Pesh., Jero. The same Hebrew word

Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
Thou turnest man to destruction;
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep:

---

occurs in lxxi. 3, xci. 9. The LXX, altering the last letter to one much like it, reads 'refuge': so Wellhausen, &c.

2. Render: 'Before the mountains were begotten (born), or earth and fruit-bearing world were brought forth' (with birth pains); 'Yea from eternity' (in the past) 'to eternity' (in the future) 'thou art God.'

thou hadst formed: render: 'were brought forth,' see above: only one vowel in the Hebrew need be changed: so the Greek versions and Targ. On the other hand, Pesh., Jero. have the active, as M.T.

3. Render: 'Thou makest man return to dust-particles: Then thou sayest come back, O ye men (human beings).'

man: the Hebrew word (= Latin *vir*) is that used in viii. 4ª, and commonly explained, even now, as 'man in his weakness,' see on cxiii. 15. But it cannot be too much insisted upon that in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry pairs of words like the two Hebrew words for 'man' are treated as synonyms, though in other connexions they have significant differences of sense.

4. when it is past: so translate, not as R. Vm. 'when it passeth.' A small letter (*yod*) has been, by error, written twice, and so the verb has assumed the verb of an imperf. or present.

The **it** refers to the (term of) 1,000 years. 'Yesterday' is always past.

a **watch:** at this time there were three watches in the night: in our Lord's day and for some time before there were four. See on cxix. 148. What passes more quickly or more imperceptibly than a night watch, when people are wrapt in sleep!

When a thousand years have glided by, to God it seems no longer than one day. Man's days, though few, are so full of trouble that they seem very long. With God time does not count.

5. Render: 'Thou sowest them year by year: they are like sprouting grass.' We must, no doubt, read 'thou sowest' for **thou carriest**: the Hebrew for the former could easily be mistaken

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
7 For we are consumed in thine anger,
And in thy wrath are we troubled.
8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath:
We bring our years to an end as a tale *that is told.*
10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten,

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for that in the M. T., as a glance at the original will show: see lxxvii. 18.

In the morning: these words were dittographed by mistake from the next verse and must be omitted here.

6. Render: 'In the morning it (the grass) blossoms and sprouts: in the evening it is mown down and withers.'

groweth up: the Hebrew means 'to glide by,' 'to pass away.' Ewald maintains that it is the change of decay that is here meant; but that sense does not suit the verb in verse 5: in both verses it is best to explain the verb as meaning 'to move upward'; then 'to grow.'

7-10. *Man's sorrow due to God's anger, the cause of God's anger being man's sin.*

7. we are consumed: Heb. 'come to an end.'

troubled: the element of fear lies in the word: 'we are dismayed' preserves that element.

The 'we' and the 'our' of this Psalm refer to the nation. This Psalm had apparently a liturgical origin.

8. sins: read 'sin' with most authorities.

in the light, &c.: in iv. 6, lxxxix. 15 (see on) the light of God's face is His bright smile and His favour: in this verse it is the light (*lit.* here 'luminary') which reveals sins otherwise unknown.

9. Render: 'For all our days decline' (towards evening): 'In consequence of thy wrath we come to an end: Our years are as a sigh' (so quick in passing).

We bring our years, &c.: read (with LXX, &c.) as above, altering the Hebrew vowels.

as a tale *that is told*: Heb. 'as a sigh.'

The LXX renders: 'Our years have gone on performing their tasks like a spider.'

10. Render: 'The day of our years, their high point is seventy years, And if we have much strength eighty years; Yet their

Or even by reason of strength fourscore years;
Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow;
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.
Who knoweth the power of thine anger, 11
And thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto thee?
So teach us to number our days, 12
That we may get us an heart of wisdom.
Return, O LORD; how long? 13
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
O satisfy us in the morning with thy mercy; 14
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

(whole) extent is weariness and trouble: Surely it passes quickly away and we take our flight' (hence).

The average age of men is by no means seventy years. Besides, the Hebrew construction in 10c is peculiar, and suggests corruption. We should, with Duhm, make a small change in the Hebrew and render as above.

their pride: read, 'their extent,' altering one letter for another much like it: see on cxxxviii. 3.

11-17. *Sundry petitions.*

11 f. Prayer for wisdom to see and recognize Jehovah's anger and the consequent brevity of life.

11. power (of thine anger): i. e. 'extent,' as Latin *vis*, and Welsh *pwr*. So in provincial Welsh-English one hears of a 'power of good,' 'a power of men.'

the fear that is due unto thee: rather, 'thy power to awaken fear.'

12. So: i. e. as thy wrath demands.

That we may get us: that we may bring (to the consideration of things) a wise intellect.

13-17. *Prayer for a restoration of the Divine favour so that the people may be gladdened.*

13. Return: better, 'make a turn,' 'a change'; see vi. 4. The brief and elliptical **how long** is very expressive.

let it repent thee, &c.: rather, 'be compassionate towards,' &c. The Hebrew construction for 'to repent' is different. With 13b cf. Deut. xxxii. 36.

14. in the morning: i. e. 'quickly,' 'soon.'

rejoice: Heb. 'give forth ringing shouts of joy.'

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast
afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory upon their children.
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

91 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High

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15. Let us have as much gladness in the future as we have had sadness in the past.

16. thy work: rather here, 'thy working' or 'doing.'

17. Render: 'May the favour of the Lord be upon us: Establish thou the work of our hands: Yea the work of our hands establish thou it.'

beauty: better, 'favour,' 'goodwill.'

the LORD should be printed 'Lord.' *Yahweh* (Jehovah) is not in the original.

The second **upon us** is a dittograph, and must go out. Its absence is required by rhythm and sense.

If nothing special is referred to in this verse the meaning is: 'Let our daily tasks prosper.'

PSALM XCI.

Theme. Jehovah the Protector of all them that put their trust in Him.

I. *Contents.* (1) The happiness of those who make Jehovah their refuge (verses 1 f.).

(2) Reasons for this happiness: Jehovah will protect them against evils of every kind (verses 3–13).

(3) Jehovah's promise to defend and deliver those who trust in Him (verses 14–16).

Psalms 90 f. are closely allied in language and thought, both of them having many affinities with Deut. xxxii. Perhaps the two Psalms are by the same author, and were intended to supplement each other, Ps. xci expressing the realization of the prayer with which Ps. xc closes.

The apparent change of person in verses 2 and 9 has led many to regard the Psalm as antiphonal. But the alleged change of person is due to textual corruption: see on verses 2, 9.

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress ; 2
My God, in whom I trust.
For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, 3
And from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with his pinions, 4

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of the Psalm on Deut. xxxii shows that it was not composed before B. C. 621. The doctrine of angels put forth in verses 11 f. makes a post-exilic date likely.

Verses 1 f. The happiness of those who make Jehovah their refuge.

1. Render : 'Happy is the man who dwells in the hiding place of the Most High, Who abides in the shadow of the Almighty.'

The word 'happy' has almost certainly dropped out from the beginning of the verse, its resemblance to the next word (in Hebrew) leading to this. Without it the Hebrew is peculiar.

Almighty : Heb. *Shaddai*, a word of uncertain meaning : see vol. i. p. 359.

2. Render : 'Say concerning Jehovah : (He is) my refuge and my fastness, My God in whom I trust.'

I will say : read 'say,' changing the vowels.

3-13. *Reasons for the happiness of those who trust Jehovah.*

In 3-6 there is an enumeration of the evils to which the godly man is exposed.

3. shall deliver : render, 'delivers.' In verses 3 f. the verbs should probably be construed as presents. The Hebrew impf. used here is the tense (so called) of unfinished action.

snare of the fowler : the same figure is found in cxxiv. 7 ; cxli. 9 ; Hos. ix. 8. When the righteous man has fallen into the hands of insidious foes Jehovah rescues him.

noisome pestilence : 'noisome' in Old English (from Lat. *nocēre*) means 'noxious.' But it is better to read 'ruinous word,' i.e. calumny, slander. So LXX, Sym. and (essentially) Pesh. : it is only a difference of Hebrew vowels. **The snare of the fowler** will then refer to plots to entrap him into compromising speech.

4. Translate the verbs as presents : see on verse 3.

pinions (parts of wings) : **wings :** note that God is here pictured as having wings, with which He protects His people, as the bird its young. In Solomon's temple two winged cherubs overshadowed the ark. Cherubs and winged bulls play a prominent part in Semitic mythology. The well-known winged

And under his wings shalt thou take refuge:
His truth is a shield and a buckler.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.

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bull with a human head is called in Assyrian *Kiribu*, in Heb. *Kerub*, the same word in both cases: see on lxxx. 1, and on xcix. 1.

The last part of verse 4 is placed by Duhm at the close of verse 7, where it is much more suitable.

His truth: rather, 'His faithfulness.'

5. Render: 'Thou needest not be afraid of any terrible thing at night, Nor of any arrow that may happen to fly in the day' (time).

terror: Heb. 'an object of fear': 'something that awakens fear.'

6. Render: ('Thou needest not be afraid') 'of any pestilence that may stalk (walk) about in darkness: (nor) of destruction, nor of the demon of noonday.'

pestilence: disease is represented as a living being hovering about and attacking human beings. There is an implied reference to the belief of the Semites that every disease was due to the action of some evil spirit—a demon; and that the way to cure the malady was to expel the demon. See *Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Hebrews*, &c., by the present writer, p. 102 f.

in darkness: it was at night that evil spirits were supposed to do their work: see Exod. xi. 45; Isa. xxxvii. 36.

that wasteth, &c.: read, 'nor of the demon of noonday,' making very slight changes. The M. T. is neither grammatical nor sensible. Late Jewish writings recognized the existence of morning, noonday, and night demons.

7. Render: 'Though a thousand (men) should fall at thy side, And ten thousand at thy right hand, It shall not come near to thee.' ('His faithfulness is thy shield and wall of defence.')

The last clause of verse 4 belongs here probably. The verse supposes a case, but in Hebrew a conditional clause has often no particle accompanying it, so that our translators frequently, as here,

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, 8
And see the reward of the wicked.
For thou, O LORD, art my refuge! 9
Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee, 10
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee, 11
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands, 12
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: 13

---

miss the sense of the O. T. author. 'Thou art as safe as Israel was when the destroying angel wrought such havoc among the Egyptians' (Exod. xii. 23).

8. Only: the word belongs to the whole sentence, not merely to 'eyes': cf. with this verse Deut. xxxii. 35, 41.

9. Render: 'For Jehovah is thine own refuge, The Lofty One thy place of safety.'

For thou: in Hebrew idiom the personal pronoun has frequently no other effect than to lay stress on an oblique form of the pronoun. Here it emphasizes 'thy' in 'thy refuge,' which must be read (with Wellhausen, &c.) for '*my* refuge'; cf. '*thy* habitation' in 9^b.

habitation: read 'refuge' as in xc. 1; so LXX.

10. plague: the Hebrew word is specially used of a Divine infliction for sin, leprosy, &c.

11 f. The reference to angels in these verses shows the Psalm is of late date.

11. The Rabbis saw in this verse an allusion to the two ministering angels which every man was supposed to have. But in the O. T. such angels belong to nations, not individuals. For illustration of this verse see Tobit, Dan. iii, and cf. Ps. xxxiv. 7; Gen. xxiv. 7, 40; Exod. xxiii. 20.

in all thy ways: in all the ways ordered for thee, not in ways of thy own choosing: see Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10.

12. hands: cf. Exod. xix. 4: Heb. 'palms of thy hands.'

13. lion: read, 'asp': so LXX, Pesh. The Hebrew differs in one only of three consonants. Cf. **adder**; one would hardly speak of treading on a 'lion.'

adder: same word in lviii. 4. It is the Egyptian cobra that is meant, the reptile by which Cleopatra took her own life. The word is found also in Deut. xxxii. 33; Job xx. 14; Isa. xi. 8.

The young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him:
I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble:
I will deliver him, and honour him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him,
And shew him my salvation.

92 A Psalm, a Song for the sabbath day.

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD,

14–16. *Jehovah's promise to His people. The speaker is no longer the Psalmist, but Jehovah.*

14. set his love upon me: *lit.* 'clung affectionately to me': see Deut. ix. 7, x. 15.

(**set him**) **on high:** i. e. beyond the reach of his foes; cf. xx. 1.

known my name: i. e. known the name by which God was to be called upon in prayer: so = 'known how to seek me in prayer.' In later times the name *Yahweh* (Jehovah) acquired a mystical signification, a supposed source of magic power to those who knew it: but that time was not yet.

15 f. Cf. l. 15, 23; verse 15 resembles l. 15 closely.

15. Render: 'When he calls upon me I will answer him. I will be with him in distress: I will deliver him and honour him.' The first clause is conditional, though lacking the conditional particle: see on verse 7.

16. With long life: Heb. 'with length of life': Deut. xxx. 20; Prov. iii. 2, 16. This is the reward promised, not a future haven and heaven of joy: see Exod. xx. 12, xxiii. 26. The wicked, on the other hand, will be cut off: see verses 7 f.

will I satisfy him: cf. xc. 14: i. e. 'let him live as long as he finds life worth living.' In Gen. xxxv. 29, &c. it is said of those who had lived to a good old age that they died 'satisfied' in days.

PSALM XCII.

Psalms xcii–c are liturgical, and were probably composed for temple purposes. According to the Targum and Talmud Psalm

And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:
To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, 2
And thy faithfulness every night,
With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery; 3

---

xcii was composed for use on the sabbath, the Psalms for the other days being, according to the Talmud, as follows (beginning with Monday): xxiv, xlviii, lxxii, xciv, lxxxi, xciii. In style and matter Psalms xciii and xcv are closely allied, and, except for liturgical considerations, would not have been separated by Psalm xciv which is later in date and different in character.

Theme. A hymn of praise to Jehovah on account of what He has done.

I. *Title.* This Psalm was prescribed to be sung on the sabbath because the works of God in creation are supposed to be celebrated on that day: see verses 4 f.

II. *Contents.* (1) The duty of praising Jehovah on account of what He has done (verses 1–6).
(2) The ultimate ruin of the wicked (verses 7–11).
(3) The final triumph of the righteous (verses 12–15).

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm, as also the so-called 'Royal Psalms' xciii–c (except xciv), was elicited by some great deliverance, either that from Babylon, or one of the deliverances accorded the Jews during their struggle with Syria.

It is better, on the whole, to connect this series of Psalms, as the Cheyne of the Bampton Lectures does, with the period immediately following the return from Babylon. Jehovah had given proof of His sovereign power and of His love to His people by restoring them to their own land, and enabling them in part to rebuild both sanctuary and city.

1–6. *Jehovah should be praised for what He has done.*

1. good: 'proper,' 'right,' in the ethical sense: or it has the same meaning as 'comely' in xxxiii. 1, i.e. 'becoming.' The word may mean 'well-pleasing to God': cf. Gen. xxix. 18.

sing praises: *lit.* 'sing psalms,' the original noun for Psalm being cognate with the verb here.

2. The **morning** and **night** embrace here the whole day of twenty-four hours: see lv. 17, cxxvii. 2; Isa. v. 11; though in that case the words are hyperbolical. The distribution of the theme of the praise (**lovingkindness** and **faithfulness**) is poetical, not logical—due to the parallelism.

3. With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery: render, 'with a ten-stringed instrument, even with a harp': one instrument only is intended.

With a solemn sound upon the harp.
4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work :
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
5 How great are thy works, O LORD!
Thy thoughts are very deep.
6 A brutish man knoweth not ;
Neither doth a fool understand this :
7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish ;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever :
8 But thou, O LORD, art on high for evermore.
9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD,
For, lo, thine enemies shall perish ;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

---

harp: render, 'iyre' ; and on the two instruments here named see Introduction.

4. thy work: 'thy working' is what is meant by this word, the main emphasis being on the act.

I will triumph: Heb. 'I will put forth ringing shouts of joy.'

works: the Hebrew word here has a different root from that rendered **work**: here the stress is on the *result*, not on the process. The reference seems to be to some recent act of judgement and deliverance, and not to God's creating and governing the world.

5. works: as in verse 4.

thoughts: God's ulterior purpose in permitting the wicked to have, temporarily, the better lot.

6. A brutish man: see lxxiii. 22.

fool: the Hebrew word means 'silly,' 'childish.' The word rendered 'fool' in liii. 1 has usually an ethical colouring (wicked).

this: i. e. what is said in the next verse.

7–11. *The downfall of the wicked.*

7. It is that they shall be destroyed: better, 'that they may be destroyed.'

8. This one-lined verse is probably an interpolation : it interrupts the connexion of verses 7 and 9.

9. For, lo—For, lo: the repetition is for emphasis (see xciii. 3), but it helps the rhythm also.

But my horn hast thou exalted like *the horn of* the wild- 10
ox:
I am anointed with fresh oil.
Mine eye also hath seen *my desire* on mine enemies, 11
Mine ears have heard *my desire* of the evil-doers that rise
up against me.
The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: 12
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

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10. Render: 'But thou hast exalted my horn as (that of) a wild ox: Thou hast anointed me with fresh oil.'

my horn hast thou exalted: see (for this symbolical expression) on lxxv. 4.

wild-ox: according to LXX, Jero., P.B.V, A.V., Wortabet (*DB.* ii. pp. 415 f.), and others, it is the unicorn that is meant. Though, however, one horn is here spoken of, the animal has two horns according to Deut. xxxiii. 17: cf. Ps. xxii. 1. The description given in the O.T. makes it highly probable that the Hebrew word has the same meaning as the cognate Assyrian (*rimu*), viz. the wild ox, which is depicted on Assyrian monuments, and relics of which have been discovered in the bone-caves of Mount Lebanon.

I am anointed, &c.: read, 'thou hast anointed me,' &c. The verb is not that usually employed of anointing to office (the root in 'Messiah'), and it means elsewhere 'to mix.'

fresh oil: oil was used on festive and other occasions, as a means of restoring the spirits, and the fresher the oil the more effective. See xxiii. 5, xlv. 7; Isa. lxi. 3.

11. Render: 'My eye has gazed with glee upon my watchful foes: My ears have listened with joy to (the wails of) [those who have risen against me] evil-doers.'

The words in square brackets are a gloss on the word 'evil-doers,' and do not belong to the original text as the rhythm and awkwardness of construction suggest.

12–15. *The prosperity of the righteous*; cf. lii. 8 f. Righteousness pays even here and now. This is also the thought of Psalm i, and of the O.T. generally. Of any reward hereafter not a syllable is uttered here or in Ps. i.

12. like the palm tree: no tree in the East grows more plentifully or more beautifully than the palm-tree. Here and in Cant. vii. 7 it is used as a symbol of beauty.

like a cedar: a symbol of strength: see 2 Kings xiv. 9, xix. 23.

13 They that are planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and green:
15 To shew that the LORD is upright;
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

93 The LORD reigneth; he is apparelled with majesty;

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14. fruit in old age: the palm-tree has been known to reach a height of ninety feet, and an age of 200 years (Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. 286).

14[a] refers to the palm-tree, and 14[b] (**full of sap**, &c.) to the olive-tree: cf. Judges ix. 9.

15. See Deut. xxxii. 4.

my rock: LXX 'my God,' see on lxxv. 5, and on lxxviii. 35; Pesh. 'strong': Targ., Jero. 'my strength.'

ROYAL PSALMS.

Psalms xciii to c (except xciv) have been called 'Royal,' 'Theocratic,' and 'Eschatological-Jehovistic Psalms.' The prevailing note that sounds through all of them is that Jehovah reigns, or has begun to assert His rule. This series of Psalms is not to be confounded with Psalms also called 'Royal,' in which the praises of an earthly king are celebrated, as in Psalms xx f., xlv, lxi, lxiii, lxxii, &c. Psalms xciii to c (except xciv), together with Psalms xlvii and lxxxvii, which belong to the same class, are Messianic in the confidence with regard to the future which they express: see Introduction, pp. 9 ff.

PSALM XCIII.

Theme. Jehovah has become king.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah has asserted His eternal kingship (verses 1 f.).

(2) His victory over all foes (verses 3 f.).

(3) The inviolability of His laws (verses 5 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Authorship and Date of Psalm xcii.

1 f. *Jehovah is King.*

1. The LORD reigneth: render, 'Jehovah is become King' or 'has begun His reign.' We have here an example of what is called in Hebrew Grammar the 'Inceptive Perf.,' corresponding to the 'Inceptive Aorist' in Greek: see 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 11, &c.

The LORD is apparelled, he hath girded himself with strength:
The world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.
Thy throne is established of old: 2
Thou art from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, O LORD, 3
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
Above the voices of many waters, 4
The mighty breakers of the sea,
The LORD on high is mighty.
Thy testimonies are very sure: 5
Holiness becometh thine house,
O LORD, for evermore.

O LORD, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, 94

The world also is stablished: better render with LXX, Pesh: 'Yea, He has established the world.' Jehovah is the subject throughout the verse.

2. Of right Jehovah has always been King.

3 f. *Jehovah's victory over His foes.*

The language of these verses seems suggested by the Babylonian Tiamat-myth: see on lxxiv. 13 f., and on lxxxix. 10 f. But the immediate reference is to Egypt and Assyria, who had lifted themselves up against Jehovah, as did the primaeval waters when He would create a *Kosmos* out of *Chaos*.

3. The floods: the Hebrew word is that commonly used for rivers.

4. Render: 'More glorious than the voices of many waters; More glorious than the waves (breakers) of the sea, Is Jehovah on high.' The above rendering assumes some slight changes in the M. T., but none in the consonants. The double occurrence of 'glorious' is quite in the manner of the Royal Psalms ('anadiplosis'). See on cxxx. 12.

5. The inviolability of Jehovah's laws.

testimonies: Heb. 'admonitions,' 'commands,' as in Ps. 119.

sure: firm, unalterable as God Himself (Jas. i. 17).

Holiness: here = 'inviolability,' 'unchangeableness.'

PSALM XCIV.

Theme. Prayer for vengeance upon wrongdoers. The happiness of God's people.

Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth.
2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth:
Render to the proud *their* desert.
3 LORD, how long shall the wicked,
How long shall the wicked triumph?
4 They prate, they speak arrogantly:
All the workers of iniquity boast themselves.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to Jehovah that He may take vengeance upon unjust rulers (verses 1–7).

(2) These rulers are rebuked for their folly in denying that Jehovah takes cognizance of their conduct (verses 8–11).

(3) The happiness of those who await patiently the final issue of things (verses 12–15).

(4) The Psalmist's realization of safety in Jehovah will sustain him and confound his foes (verses 16–23).

II. *Authorship and Date.* Psalms xciv and cxxxix seem to show dependence on Job, and the former on Psalm lxxiii (cf. verses 2–4, 16) as well. It is the problem of suffering that is dealt with in the three Psalms named and also in Job, as well as in Pss. xxxvii and xlix. In Psalm lxxiii the solution of the problem lies in the more than overbalancing joy of fellowship with God: in the present Psalm it comes from the conviction that God rules and overrules. The latter solution is more objective and more characteristic of a later time. That the Psalm is late may be also inferred from its almost certain dependence on Job and on Psalm lxxiii: but what definite period in the nation's history gave rise to the Psalm cannot be ascertained.

1–7. *Appeal to Jehovah to punish the unjust rulers.*

1. Render: 'O God of great vengeance! O Jehovah!'
'O God of great vengeance!'

vengeance: Heb. pl. of intensity, 'great or much vengeance.' 'God of great vengeance' = 'God who avenges much': see on cix. 4.

shine forth: in l. 2 and lxxx. 1 as here of a theophany.

2–4 seem dependent on lxxiii. 6-9. The wicked are described in both places in a very similar way.

2. Lift up thyself: in judicial majesty: see vii. 6. Get thyself up—upon thy throne.

3. triumph: Heb. 'exult': 'dance with joy.'

In verses 4–7 those people are described on whom vengeance is called.

4. Render: 'They belch out, they speak arrogant (words): they play at loud talk.'

They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, 5
And afflict thine heritage.
They slay the widow and the stranger, 6
And murder the fatherless.
And they say, The LORD shall not see, 7
Neither shall the God of Jacob consider.
Consider, ye brutish among the people: 8
And ye fools, when will ye be wise?
He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? 9
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?
He that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct, 10

In 5 f. the Psalmist brings against the ruling class the same charges that the prophets often made.

5. break in pieces: 'crush,' as in Isa. iii. 15; Prov. xxii. 22: i. e. by extortionate and violent dealings.

heritage: see xxviii. 9; Deut. iv. 20.

6. They exercise their cruelty upon those who cannot defend themselves—widows, sojourners and orphans.

stranger: see on cxix. 19.

7. The LORD: Heb. *Jah*: see on lxxxviii. 8.

8–11. *The folly of the ruling class rebuked.*

8. Render: 'Consider ye, that act as brutes among the people, And ye dullards, when will ye get to understand?'

brutish: the Hebrew word is a participle, the verb being a denominative from the noun for brute, beast of the field or forest. Translate as above.

among the people: the word for 'people' (*'am*) is the one used generally for 'Israel.' To act brutishly among them was an aggravation of their guilt.

9. The argument is—He who gave others the power to hear and see can surely Himself hear and see. J. Stuart Mill said that this verse contains the strongest argument for the existence of God.

10. Just as verse 9 contains an illustration from men's physical organism, so in the present verse we have one supplied by God's moral government of the world.

chastiseth: better as R. V. marg., 'instructeth.'

nations: the regular word for heathen peoples. The argument is: 'He who instructs the heathen (by chastening them), shall he not correct (by chastisement) wrongdoers among His own people?' Jehovah instructs even the heathen, and according to the measure of that instruction will they be judged. See Rom. i. 20, ii. 14 f.

Even he that teacheth man knowledge?
11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man,
That they are vanity.
12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD,
And teachest out of thy law;
13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,
Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 For judgement shall return unto righteousness:
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.

***Even* he that teacheth man knowledge:** read, 'He that teaches man, has He not knowledge (or knows He not)?' This is supported by rhythm and sense.

11. This verse answers the question restored at the end of the foregoing verse, 'Does not God know?' verse 11, 'Yea, Jehovah knows,' &c.

thoughts: that they can sin on with impunity.

That they: i. e. the thoughts.

vanity: Heb. 'a breath.'

Duhm omits verse 11 as a gloss on verses 9 f., as it has neither poetical form nor suitable connexion. As to the latter see above.

12–15. *The good fortune of those who wait.*

12. Blessed = happy: see on lxxxiv. 4.

O LORD: Heb. 'Yah' (Jah): see on lxxxviii. 8.

law: see on lxxviii. 1.

13. rest: objective rest, = 'security,' is meant, for it involves protection against the unjust rulers until their power is gone.

from the days of adversity: rather, 'in the days,' &c.

Until the pit be digged: 'pit' is used figuratively for destruction: 'until the means for their destruction are prepared.'

14 f. Gives reasons for what has been said about **rest** in verse 13.

14. his people—his inheritance—how could Jehovah leave *them*?

15. judgement in this verse means, as in some other passages, the justice of the law courts: customary justice. In the good time foreshadowed the actual justice of the gates will turn (the lit. sense of the verb) towards absolute equity or righteousness: will be in accord with this last.

Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? 16
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
Unless the LORD had been my help, 17
My soul had soon dwelt in silence.
When I said, My foot slippeth; 18
Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
In the multitude of my thoughts within me 19
Thy comforts delight my soul.
Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with thee, 20
Which frameth mischief by statute?
They gather themselves together against the soul of the 21
righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood.
But the LORD hath been my high tower; 22
And my God the rock of my refuge.
And he hath brought upon them their own iniquity, 23

16–23. *Sense of security in Jehovah.*

17. silence, i. e. Sheol, the land of silence. This is the later conception of Sheol. See on lxxxviii. 10–13.

18. Render: 'When I think' (='say inwardly') 'my foot has slipt' (='tottered'), 'Thy lovingkindness sustains me.'

19. my thoughts: the Hebrew word means 'distracting thoughts': thoughts which divide, distract the mind, cf. Keats's 'branched thoughts' (*Ode to Psyche*), and see Matt. vi. 25, where the Greek of 'be not anxious' means literally, 'be not divided up' ('in mind'): 'be not distracted.'

20. frameth: the same word in the same sense in Isa. xlvi. 11.

by statute: these wicked judges are wise as well as wicked, for they save themselves by keeping within the rigid requirements of the law.

21. They gather themselves together: read , making a small change in the text', 'They stir up strife': so Olshausen, &c. The M. T. means, 'They gather themselves together in troops.'

22. But the LORD hath been, &c.: translate, 'But Jehovah will be,' &c. In this verb and the first verb of the next verse we have examples of the 'perfect of certainty.'

the rock of my refuge: render, 'my rock of refuge.' As to the name 'Rock' for God see on lxxv. 5.

23. he hath brought: render, 'he will bring.'

And shall cut them off in their own evil;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

95 O come, let us sing unto the LORD:
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,

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iniquity: the Hebrew word means 'trouble,' 'sorrow': then sin, as causing that.

in their own evil: i. e. 'by means of,' &c., not as Hitzig, &c., 'in proportion to.'

PSALM XCV.

Theme. Summons to worship Jehovah, coupled with a warning against unbelief.

I. *Contents.* There are two distinct parts of the Psalm, and perhaps two independent Psalms.

(1) A summons to worship God, with reasons (verses 1–7^{b}).

(2) A warning against falling into the unbelief of the fathers (verses 7^{c}–11).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on *Authorship and Date* of Psalm xciii.

Duhm and Cheyne (2) hold that the two parts of the Psalm are two originally independent Psalms composed by two different writers at two different times, just as in our Psalm lxxxi two separate Psalms are brought together. It must be admitted that in this group of Royal Psalms the solemn didactic section (verses 7^{c}–11) comes in strangely, and appears out of place.

1 f. *Summons to worship God.*

1. sing: rather, 'ring out our joy,' 'express our joy in loud, shrill cries.'

make a joyful noise: the Hebrew verb means 'to shout for joy in honour of some one': so xlvii. 2, lxxxi. 2, xcviii. 6. It has very often the meaning of making a noise with trumpets, as was done on festive occasions: see Num. xvi. 9; Joshua ii. 1, vi. 10, 16. This Psalm is, like Psalm lxxxi. 5^{c}–16, probably a festival song, and we should therefore translate here: 'Let us sound our trumpets aloud to the rock,' &c. This is supported by the addition made to the same verb in the second part of the next verse. 'Let us sound our trumpets aloud with (accompanying) psalms.' See on lxxxix. 15.

the rock of our salvation: rather, 'our rock of salvation': see on xciv. 22 and (for 'rock') on lxxv. 5.

2. Let us come before his presence: *lit.* 'let us go before

Let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For the LORD is a great God,
And a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, and he made it;
And his hands formed the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker:

His face,' i. e. as servants going to meet their master: the words express an attitude of inferiority. See on lxxxix. 14.

thanksgiving: the Hebrew word (*todah*) means 'confession,' 'acknowledgement,' either that of obligation, so = 'thanksgiving,' or of God's attributes which = 'praise'; both ideas go much together. It is used in general for the hymns sung in the temple.

joyful noise: rather, 'let us sound our trumpets aloud'; see on verse 1.

3-5. *Reasons for the exhortations in verses* 1 f.

3. And a great King above all gods: render: 'and a king greater than all gods.'

The existence of the gods with whom Jehovah is compared is apparently implied.

4. deep places: Heb. *lit.* 'explored places': then, as here, 'places reached by digging': so as R. V. 'deep places.' The antithesis with 'the heights of the mountains' negatives the rendering of LXX, Baethgen, &c., 'the distant parts (of the earth).'

The heights of the mountains: according to Hebrew etymology the word rendered 'heights' means 'toilsome heights': but a root found in Arabic gives this noun the sense 'highest point,' 'summit,' 'peak,' which suits admirably.

5. Render: 'To whom belongs the sea, for He made it; And the dry land, (for) His hand formed (it).'

and he made it: a 'circumstantial clause,' to be rendered as above.

And his hands formed the dry land: render as above. A conjunction has probably dropped out of the Hebrew (*waw* = 'and,' 'for'), which is restored above ('for').

6. our Maker: i. e. the 'one who has made us to be His own people': not 'our Creator.'

7 For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
To-day, Oh that ye would hear his voice!
8 Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and saw my work.
10 Forty years long was I grieved with *that* generation,

7a b. Render (freely): 'For He is our God, Since we are the people whom He has shepherded, and the (erring) sheep whom He has guided by His hand.'

The last clause of verse 7 ('To-day,' &c.) belongs to the next part of the Psalm, and should be attached to verse 8. This is one of the instances in which an altogether new section dealing with a different theme begins within the verse.

For **people of his pasture** (shepherding) see lxxvii. 1, lxxix. 13, &c.

To-day, &c.: it is better to regard 7c as a protasis, the apodosis of which follows in verse 8; render: 'To-day if ye will (but) listen to His voice, (verse 8) Harden not, &c.' Since Jehovah begins to speak in 7c *my* **voice** would have suited best: but in Hebrew poetry the persons are often greatly varied.

8. The reference is to the incident recorded in Exod. xvii. 1–7, which occurred in the second year after the Exodus; cf. the similar incident of Num. xx. 2–13, and see on lxxviii. 15. Meribah ('place of striving') and Massah ('place of tempting') stand for one place according to Exod. xvii. 7, though Num. xx. 2–13 seems to make them two places. In the LXX, Vulg., Jero., as in Heb. iii. 8, the names are translated, though not correctly.

9. tempted me: tried me, as if they wanted to see what I would do.

Proved me: tested me; see Heb. iii. 9.

and saw my work: the Hebrew can mean, and probably does mean, 'though they saw my work'; see Neh. vi. 1; Isa. xlix. 15.

10. Forty years: from the crossing of the Red Sea to entering Canaan; Num. xiv. 32, xxxii. 13.

was I grieved: Heb. 'loathed I,' 'was I disgusted with.' In the LXX, as in Heb. iii. 10, 'I was indignant with,' 'displeased with'; see on cxix. 158.

that **generation:** the pronoun 'that,' though lacking in the

And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,
And they have not known my ways:
Wherefore I sware in my wrath, 11
That they should not enter into my rest.

O sing unto the LORD a new song: 96
Sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

M. T., is found in the LXX. Probably it was accidentally omitted from the Hebrew.

a people: the LXX (so Heb. iii. 10) implies a longer Hebrew word (*'olam* for *'am*) meaning 'always' or 'for ever': 'they do always err,' &c.

that do err in their heart: *lit.* 'wanderers of heart'; cf. Isa. xxix. 24, 'wanderers in spirit.'

11. Wherefore: rather, 'So that'; cf. Gen. xiii. 16; Deut. xxviii. 27, 51, where the same particle has the same meaning.

PSALM XCVI.

Theme. All nations and all nature are to praise Jehovah because He is universal King.

I. *Title.* In the LXX Psalms xcvi–xcix are 'David' Psalms.

II. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah to be praised in all the earth (verses 1–3).
(2) He alone of the gods deserves to be praised (verses 4–6).
(3) The heathen summoned to worship Him (verses 7–9).
(4) All nature summoned to rejoice in the sovereignty of Jehovah (verses 10–13).

It is Jehovah's reign over Israel that is mainly celebrated in the foregoing Royal Psalms: in the present Psalm (see verses 7–9) the heathen are also invoked to bring to Jehovah the tribute of praise.

This Psalm, which is closely allied to Ps. xxix in both spirit and language, is cited, with minor deviations, in 1 Chron. xvi. 22–33 as part of the Psalm which David handed to Asaph and his brethren to be sung when the ark was brought to Zion: the version in Chronicles can be proved to be dependent on the present Psalm.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. xciii.

1–3. *All the world invoked to praise Jehovah.*

1. new song: from Isa. xlii. 10. A fresh deliverance calls for a new song. See xxxiii. 3, &c.: cf. Rev. v. 9.

all the earth: i. e. all the inhabitants of the earth, the verb

2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name;
Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
3 Declare his glory among the nations,
His marvellous works among all the peoples.
4 For great is the LORD, and highly to be praised:
He is to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols:
But the LORD made the heavens.
6 Honour and majesty are before him:
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
7 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the peoples,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name:
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.

---

being accordingly plural. But verses 3 and 10 make it likely that the scattered Israelites—those of the Diaspora—are meant.

2. With 1^b and 2^b cf. 1 Chron. xvi. 23.

bless: *lit.* 'adore on bended knees.'

his name: Him as manifested in His word and works.

Shew forth, &c.: Heb. 'announce as good tidings His deliverance.'

3. Cf. Isa. lxvi. 18.

nations and **peoples** stand for the heathen. Israelites are to proclaim the glory of Jehovah among the Gentiles.

marvellous works: see on lxxviii. 4.

4–6. *Jehovah to be praised above all gods.*

4. highly to be praised: or 'very praiseworthy.'

above all gods: render, 'more than all gods.' See on xcv. 3.

5. idols: the radical sense of the Hebrew word is probably 'a feeble being' (cf. Aramaic). The Assyrian suggests a meaning 'nothingness' (cf. Heb. *'al*). The LXX translates the word here and elsewhere by 'demons': see *Magic*, &c., by the present writer, p. 38.

6. before him: as vassals, see on lxxxix. 14 and on xcv. 2.

his sanctuary: in 1 Chron. xvi. 27 'in His place.'

The recently erected temple is meant, or perhaps heaven.

7–9. *The heathen summoned to worship God.*

7. kindred: the Hebrew word denotes a part of a tribe. 'Clan' seems the best English equivalent.

8. courts: in the temple of Zerubbabel there were two courts,

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness : 9
Tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, The LORD reigneth : 10
The world also is stablished that it cannot be moved :
He shall judge the peoples with equity.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice ; 11
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof ;
Let the field exult, and all that is therein ; 12
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy ;
Before the LORD, for he cometh ; 13
For he cometh to judge the earth :

---

that of the priests and that of the Israelites : see Hastings' *DB.*, iv. p. 713 (article 'Temple,' by the present writer). Neither of these could of right be entered by Gentiles : but here the Gentiles are invited to take their place alongside the Israelites in the temple courts, that all may unite in one song of praise to the universal King.

9. in the beauty of holiness : the Hebrew means 'with holy attire.'

10–13. *All nature invoked to acclaim the kingship of Jehovah.*

10. The LORD reigneth : has become, once more, King : see on xciii. 1.

is stablished : read, 'He has adjusted' or 'set in order the world' : the same Hebrew consonants can have this meaning. So LXX, Sym., Pesh., Jero.

The world : *lit.* '(the) productive world.' See on lxxxix. 12.

11. rejoice : Heb. 'exult' = leap for joy.

the fulness thereof : 'that which fills it,' the fishes, &c. See Isa. xlii. 10, and note the phrase 'earth and its fulness,' xxiv. 1, l. 12, lxxxix. 12.

See lxix. 34, xcviii. 4, &c. : cf. Joel i f. ; Isa. xxiv, &c., where similar sympathy between man and nature is expressed.

12. field : not field in our sense, but the free open land in contrast with the land on which cities are built : so Mic. iv. 10 ; Jer. xl. 7.

Then : render, 'yea,' changing one letter (*p* for *z*), both much alike in Hebrew.

13. For he cometh : occurs twice, another instance of 'anadiplosis.' See on xciii. 4, and on cxxxv. 12.

to judge : 'to rule.' See on lxxxi. 4.

He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his truth.

97 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad.
2 Clouds and darkness are round about him:
Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of his throne.

---

peoples: plural of the word usually applied to Israel, but meaning here probably faithful ones among all nations.

truth: 'faithfulness': Jehovah's administration is characterized by justice (cf. **with righteousness**) towards all, and by faithfulness towards those who keep His covenant.

PSALM XCVII.

Theme. Jehovah's appearance in majesty and judgement; a terror to the wicked, a solace to the righteous.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's manifestation as King. Once more He has come forth amid many signs to assert His royal prerogatives (verses 1–6).

(2) The effect of His coming, upon the wicked—confusion: upon the righteous—gladness (verses 7–9).

(3) Lessons suggested by this Theophany (verses 10–12).

This Psalm, compiled for liturgical purposes, is made up of extracts from earlier Scriptures very deftly woven together.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Ps. xciii.

1–6. *Jehovah's accession to the throne, with the accompanying signs.*

1. See Isa. xlii. 10, 12, li. 5.

The LORD reigneth: i. e. has become King. See on xciii. 1.

rejoice: Heb. 'exult,' 'leap for joy.'

isles: a word taken from Deutero-Isaiah, where it is very common. It has there, and therefore here, the meaning 'coastlands,' 'lands bordering on the sea,' especially the Mediterranean. The word means also 'island,' as in Jer. xlvii. 4.

Verses 2, 3 and 6 depend on l. 3–6. Perhaps the account of the Theophany on Sinai has suggested the imagery in both Psalms: see Exod. xix. 16, xx. 21; Deut. v. 22.

2. With 2^a cf. xviii. 8–12.

2^b is extracted from lxxxix. 14^a.

Two complementary truths are uttered concerning Jehovah in

A fire goeth before him,
And burneth up his adversaries round about.
His lightnings lightened the world:
The earth saw, and trembled.
The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare his righteousness,
And all the peoples have seen his glory.
Ashamed be all they that serve graven images,
That boast themselves of idols:

---

this verse: He is enshrouded in mystery: yet His rule is righteous.

For the distinction between **righteousness** and **judgement** see on xciv. 14.

3. Cf. l. 3; Deut. iv. 24; Isa. xlii. 25.

Render: 'Fire goes before Him,
And it blazes about His footsteps.'

his adversaries: read, 'His footsteps,' inserting a letter into the Hebrew word. So Wellhausen, &c. Parallelism favours this change.

The narrative tenses in 4-6, if written for this Psalm, would seem to point to specific events, such as the destruction of the Babylonians and the restoration to Palestine. But the tenses are due to the source, though the fact of their being here at all is in favour of their suitability.

4. 4^a from lxxvii. 18, 4^b from lxxvii. 16.

5. Cf. 5^a after Mic. i. 4, 5^b after Mic. iv. 13; Zech. iv. 14, &c.

at the presence of the LORD (first occurrence) should be omitted as the rhythm suggests; it is a dittograph.

6. Cf. l. 6; Isa. xxxv. 2, xl. 5, lii. 10, lxvi. 18.

The heavens are witnesses of the Divine **righteousness** (= faithfulness); see l. 4.

7-9. *Results of the Theophany upon the heathen and upon Israel.*

There is no need with Hupfeld, &c. to transpose verses 7 f. because the verbs in verse 8 have their object in verse 6. What Zion heard and rejoiced over was the judgement on idolaters implied in verse 7.

7. See Isa. xlii. 17, xliv. 11, and especially xlv. 16.

Render: 'All image-worshippers are foiled (confounded), viz. those who boasted in their helpless (gods): all gods bowed down before Him,'

Worship him, all ye gods.
8 Zion heard and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced;
Because of thy judgements, O LORD.
9 For thou, LORD, art most high above all the earth:
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
10 O ye that love the LORD, hate evil:
He preserveth the souls of his saints;
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown for the righteous,

The verbs are wrongly translated as imperatives in the E.VV. (so LXX, &c.).

gods: in LXX 'angels,' from a reluctance to acknowledge the real existence of heathen deities. Heb. i. 6 follows the LXX here as this epistle does always.

8. From xlviii. 11, but in the original passage Zion *witnesses* the deliverance: in the present verse Zion *hears* of it. In lii. 7 the messengers are bidden to go and tell Zion, 'Thy God has become King.' Here Zion has heard.

Zion: i. e. the people of Jerusalem. See Additional Note. p. 368.

heard: what? of the fall of Babylon and of the certain prospect of restoration.

daughters of Judah: i. e. the dependent cities of Judah.

judgements: here Jehovah's judicial sentences as indicated by recent events.

9. From xlvii. 2, 9, lxxxiii. 18: cf. xcv. 3.

most high: the Heb. word (*Elyōn*) is often used of God as a title of dignity. Melchizedek was a priest of God (*elyon*, 'high,' or 'very high'). One of the Phoenician gods was called '*Eliun*,' the same word.

10-12. *Some lessons of the Theophany.*

10. Cf. xxxiv. 20, xxxvii. 28; Amos v. 15.

Read and render:

'Jehovah loves those who hate evil:
He guards the life of His favoured ones:
From the power' (*lit.* 'hand') 'of the wicked He rescues them.'

The changes in the Hebrew necessary to yield the above are few and unimportant.

11. is sown: read, 'has risen,' *zarakh* and *zaru'* (changing one consonant): so nearly all ancient versions. See cxii. 4.

And gladness for the upright in heart.
Be glad in the LORD, ye righteous; 12
And give thanks to his holy name.

A Psalm. 98

O sing unto the LORD a new song; 1
For he hath done marvellous things:
His right hand, and his holy arm, hath wrought salvation for him.
The LORD hath made known his salvation: 2
His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the nations.

---

12. 12^a is from xxxii. 11^a, 12^b from xxx. 4^b.

name: Heb. 'memorial,' i. e. what one is remembered by: see cxxxv. 13; Exod. iii. 15.

PSALM XCVIII.

Theme. Man and nature urged to praise Jehovah for His deliverance.

I. *Contents.* (1) Men are urged to praise Jehovah for what He has done. But the largest place is given to a description of the grounds of the exhortation: cf. Ps. xcvi, where the appeal to men to praise Jehovah is repeated thrice before anything is said of the reason (verses 1-6).

(2) Nature is invoked to join in the anthem of praise (verses 7-9).

Like Ps. xcvii this one borrows largely, and it was also no doubt compiled to be used in the worship of the temple.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Ps. xciii.

1-6. *Men urged to praise Jehovah.*

1. See Ps. xcvi. 1^a, 3^b.

a new song: see on xcvi. 1.

His right hand, &c.: render: 'His right hand has wrought deliverance for him, His holy arm has (aided him).' The balance of the sentences would be much helped by supplying, as Baethgen recommends, some such verb as 'aid' after 'His holy arm.'

2. See Isa. lii. 10, lxiii. 5.

righteousness is parallel to **salvation**, and means the same (so in Isa. xl ff.).

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our
God.
4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth:
Break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises.
5 Sing praises unto the LORD with the harp;
With the harp and the voice of melody.
6 With trumpets and sound of cornet
Make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein;
8 Let the floods clap their hands;

---

3. For 3^b see Isa. lii. 10.

Render 3^a: 'He has remembered His favour unto Jacob, and His faithfulness unto the house of Israel.' We must, with the LXX, supply 'unto Jacob' at the end of the first clause. This greatly helps the rhythm.

4–6. *All men are to salute their King with voice and with musical instruments.*

4. With 4^a cf. xlvii. 2, 6, lxvi. 1, 4, c. 1, &c.; with 4^b cf. Isa. lii. 9.

Make a joyful noise: render: 'Blow aloud your trumpets unto Jehovah,' &c. The Hebrew may be translated either way: see on xcv. 1.

Break forth and sing for joy: render: 'Break forth into ringing shouts of joy.'

sing praises: the Hebrew can also mean 'play on stringed instruments'; probably that is its meaning here.

5. Cf. Isa. li. 3.

Sing praises: here as in verse 4 we should probably render 'play': this is supported by the noun following.

with the harp: better, 'with the lyre': see p. 27 f.

6. For the (metallic) **trumpets** and the (ram's horn) **cornet**, see p. 29 f.

Make a joyful noise: i. e. sound the trumpets aloud.

7–9. *Nature invoked to join in the loud acclamation of Jehovah's sovereignty.*

7. 7^a from xcvi. 11^b; 7^b from xxiv. 1.

8. Let the floods clap, &c. See Isa. lv. 12.

Let the hills sing for joy together ;
Before the LORD, for he cometh to judge the earth : 9
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with equity.

The LORD reigneth ; let the peoples tremble : **99**
He sitteth upon the cherubim ; let the earth be moved.
The LORD is great in Zion ; 2
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name : 3
Holy is he.

---

9. This verse is a mere repetition of xcvi. 13, omitting one occurrence of 'He is come.'

PSALM XCIX.

Theme. A call to praise Jehovah's holiness.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's holiness to be praised, because it is a pledge of His righteous rule (verses 1–5).

(2) Jehovah's holiness illustrated (verses 6–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. xciii.

1–3. *Exhortation to recognize Jehovah's holiness.*

1. The LORD reigneth: as in xciii. 1.

let the peoples . . . let the earth, &c. It is better to make the verbs imperatives as the versions do.

He sitteth, &c. : rather, according to Heb., '(even) He who sits,' &c. : the words constitute an epithet applied to Jehovah. 'Jehovah has become King . . . (even) He who sits enthroned on Cherubs.' God is similarly described in lxxx. 1 ; 1 Sam. iv. 4 ; 2 Sam. vi. 2 ; 2 Kings xix. 15, &c.

Concerning the meaning of the phrase see on lxxx. 1 and on xci. 4 (**wings**).

in Zion: where the temple was and where Jehovah dwelt pre-eminently among men : see note, pp. 368 ff. This God of Israel, whose earthly abode is the temple mount, is great.

high above: probably we should render, 'higher than.'

the peoples: here the heathen nations are meant : they have dared to deny Jehovah's authority, but He is far beyond them in power.

3 f. Render : 'Let them praise thy great and terrible name (Holy is He), 4. And (let them praise) the might of the King who loves righteousness' (='faithfulness') : 'Thou hast established equity : Thou hast executed righteous judgement in Jacob.'

In verse 3 **Holy is He** is a liturgical addition, which as little

4 The king's strength also loveth judgement ;
Thou dost establish equity,
Thou executest judgement and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt ye the LORD our God,
And worship at his footstool :
Holy is he.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that call upon his name ;
They called upon the LORD, and he answered them.
7 He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud :
They kept his testimonies, and the statute that he gave them.
8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God :

---

breaks the connexion between verses 3 f. as the refrain at the end of each verse in Ps. cxxxvi does that for the verses of that Psalm. The verb in verse 3 must be understood also with the noun which in Hebrew opens verse 4 ('might').

Various other interpretations of these verses have been offered and defended, but lack of space does not permit their being discussed here.

judgement and righteousness: another instance of hendiadys —one compound idea expressed by two nouns : judgement refers to administration, righteousness to the principle governing the administration : so the two nouns = righteous judging or ruling.

5. footstool: the Hebrew expression is used only figuratively in the O. T. : it means here the temple, as in cxxxii. 7, &c.

6-9. *What is said respecting Jehovah in verses* 1–5 *illustrated and enforced by His treatment of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.*

These three men called upon Jehovah, worshipping Him and seeking forgiveness. This involves an acknowledgement on their part of His sovereignty, and His hearing and answering them shows Him to be a gracious King as well as a great one.

6. Moses and Aaron among his priests: when the Psalm was written the priestly office was thought much of, and all Israelitish leaders of the past were apt to be regarded as belonging to this honoured class : cf. the conception in the Priestly Code (P) and in Chronicles of the religious life of Israel in the wilderness.

7. pillar of cloud: see Exod. xxxiii. 7 f. : cf. Num. xii. 5.
testimonies: 'solemn injunctions.'

Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though thou tookest vengeance of their doings.
Exalt ye the LORD our God,
And worship at his holy hill;
For the LORD our God is holy.

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

PSALM C.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah.

I. *Title.* Render: 'A Psalm for the thankoffering'; this Psalm being sung, there is reason for believing, when the thankoffering was presented at the temple, a usage suggested perhaps by the word 'thanksgiving' in verse 4. The thankoffering was made when there was something outstanding for which to give God thanks. See Lev. vii. 11 ff.

II. *Contents.* There is in the Psalm a commingling of exhortations to thank and serve Jehovah, together with reasons for the same.

The Psalm was evidently composed for public worship, and it has been used as such probably more than any other Psalm. It is sung in the modern Synagogue daily, except on Sabbath and feast days; and in the Christian Church few hymns are sung more frequently or more lustily than this one in the metrical version of William Kethe, 'All nations that on earth do dwell,' &c. We owe the name 'Old Hundredth' to this Scottish version, the hymn being taken from the old version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins.

The exhortations of the Psalm are directed, specially, if not exclusively, to Israelites, for the persons addressed are '*His* people': they were made His people (see on verse 3): they are urged to unite in the ritual of the temple.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm appears to be contemporary with the other Royal Psalms—this being the last of the series.

1. Make a joyful noise: see on xcv. 2, xcviii. 4, 'shout aloud' (in praise) is the likelier meaning here.

all ye lands: Heb. 'all the land' (=Palestine) or 'all the earth.' The rest of the Psalm shows that Israel is addressed, so that we must understand the Israelites all over the earth, or the inhabitants of Palestine.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
3 Know ye that the LORD he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
5 For the LORD is good; his mercy *endureth* for ever;
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

101 A Psalm of David.

1 I will sing of mercy and judgement:

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2. Serve: in the late sense of 'worship,' as in xxii. 31, &c.
with singing: 'with ringing shouts of joy.'

3. Know ye: either 'get to know,' 'learn from His doings,' so cxix. 23; 1 Sam. xxiii. 23, &c., or 'acknowledge,' 'confess' (in words); see li. 5; Isa. lix. 12; Jer. iii. 13, xiv. 20. The verb means also 'consider,' 'ponder over,' as in Judges xviii. 14, &c., and it may well have that sense here.

he . . . hath made us: what we are, an elect nation: so Deut. xxxii. 6, 15; Isa. lxvi. 2.

4. gates: those leading from the outside into the temple gates, there were three such, viz., on the north, east and south.

thanksgiving: 'a thankoffering,' see xcvi. 8. Parallelism, however, favours here the sense 'thanksgiving.' But when the title was prefixed the word was interpreted as = 'thankoffering'; see Lev. vii. 11 ff.

5. good: i. e. kind, as in xxv. 8, xxxiv. 9, &c.

PSALM CI.

Theme. A king's vow to conduct himself and his kingdom aright.

I. *Contents.* (1) The king's vow regarding himself (verses 1-4). (2) The king's vow as to his treatment of others, especially the wicked (verses 5-8).

The Psalm has been called a 'mirror for magistrates,' 'a mirror for a king,' &c.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of this Psalm on Proverbs (see on verses 2, 5), the dirge (*qinah*), metre, &c. point to a late date. Though it is generally regarded as containing a

Unto thee, O LORD, will I sing praises.
I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way: 2
Oh when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no base thing before mine eyes: 3
I hate the work of them that turn aside;

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king's confession of faith, nothing in the Psalm itself proves that a king wrote it or that a king's sentiments are uttered in it. Any high official in the state would meet the requirements of the case, though the old view is not excluded by anything in the Psalm.

1–4. *The king's vow as to his own life.*

1. mercy and judgement: render, 'lovingkindness and justice;' the virtues which he sings of are not Divine attributes but qualities of human action. It is of the latter alone that the Psalm speaks. See Hos. xii. 6; Isa. xvi. 5.

2. wisely: in the ethical sense—'rightly.'

way = conduct, cf. xxxix. 1, cxix. 5, 26.

when wilt thou come unto me? i. e. to favour and bless me. See Gen. xviii. 10; Exod. xx. 24; Deut. xxxiii. 2. Those who think David the speaker in this Psalm refer to 2 Sam. vi. 9.

within my house: in the East the personal character of the king, his conduct at home, has everything to do with his conduct as ruler.

3. base thing: Heb. 'a thing of belial': according to the usual etymology 'belial' is a compound word = 'worthlessness'; then 'wickedness' (cf. 'naughtiness'). Hence 'a man of belial' (1 Sam. xxv. 25, &c.) is 'a wicked man'; cf. Deut. xiii. 14, where the plural occurs. It is wrong to accept this etymology and at the same time to treat the word as a proper name (Belial): this mistake is made in the R. V., e. g. 'men of Belial,' 'sons of Belial,' &c., though the etymology just noticed seems accepted. Another etymology, one which also assumes the word to be compound, makes it = 'one who will never rise': 'a ne'er-do-weel.' Hommel and Cheyne are probably right in identifying Belial with the Babylonian Bilili, the god of the underworld, a view confirmed by the fact that in later times Belial came to have the same meaning as Satan; see 2 Cor. v. 15. Compound words are rare in Hebrew, which is an argument against the other two explanations given. Whatever may be the origin of the word, it has in the O. T. the general sense of 'wickedness,' and when joined to 'man,' 'son,' &c., see on lxxix. 11, it means one who is wicked: hence 'sons of belial' = 'wicked men,' 'a thing of belial' = 'a base or sinful thing.'

the work, &c.: better, 'the practice of obliquities' = 'the doing of what deviates from the right.'

It shall not cleave unto me.
4 A froward heart shall depart from me:
I will know no evil thing.
5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy:
Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will I not suffer.
6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:
He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house:
He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before mine eyes.
8 Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land;
To cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the LORD.

102 A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD,

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4. froward: Heb. 'perverted,' 'twisted' (from the right).
I will know: i. e. be intimate with, show sympathy with, as the verb is used in i. 6.

5–8. *The king's vow as to his treatment of his subjects.*

5. Him that hath a high look: *lit.* 'who is lofty-eyed.'
proud heart: *lit.* (who is) 'broad of heart,' i. e. whose thoughts are large, blatant. See Prov. xxi. 1.
will I not suffer: better, 'I cannot endure,' 'put up with': see Isa. i. 13.

6. minister: the Hebrew verb is the technical one for taking part in religious worship. See ciii. 21, civ. 4; cf. xxxii. 2, lii. 4, lxxviii. 57; Hos. vii. 18.

7. worketh: we should say 'practises.'
shall not be established = shall have no permanent place.

8. city of the LORD: i. e. Jerusalem; see Isa. i. 26, &c.

PSALM CII.

Theme. Prayer of one in deep distress that Jehovah may pity him.

And let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress : 2
Incline thine ear unto me ;
In the day when I call answer me speedily.
For my days consume away like smoke, 3

I. *Title.* The title to this Psalm is noteworthy in that it prescribes the occasion on which an individual is to use the Psalm, not surely in song, but by way of personal meditation. See the titles to Psalms xcii and c.

II. *Contents.* The writer describes his distress, and prays to Jehovah for help (verses 1–11).

(2) His hope and confidence in Jehovah (verses 12–28).

This Psalm owes much to other parts of the O. T., Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c.

This is one of the so-called Penitential Psalms of the Church, the others being vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, cxxx, and cxliii.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of this Psalm on Deut., Job, Isa. xl ff., Lam. and on other Psalms shows that it is a late one. The citations from Psalms lxix and lxxix favour a date during the Maccabean age. A period of great national sorrow is implied. Perhaps, as Duhm points out, we have two Psalms here and not one, for the sections verses 1–11 and verses 12–28 differ much from each other. There is nothing said or suggested in verses 1–11 about the sad state of Jerusalem, though the desponding spirit pervading these verses may be due to that condition. If we accept the unity of the Psalm we have here another example of the twofold division of threnode Psalms : see introduction to Ps. lxxix (*Contents*).

1–11. *The Psalmist describes his sad condition, and cries to Jehovah for help.*

1 f. The opening prayers of these verses are uttered in language borrowed from other Psalms : see xviii. 6, xxvii. 9, xxxi. 2, xxxix. 12, lvi. 9, lix. 16 f.

1. my cry : Heb. ' my cry for help.'

come unto thee : in none of the Psalms is the late Jewish belief implied that prayer was conveyed into God's throne-room by the four ' angels of the presence.'

2. See lxviii. 17. LXX, Pesh., ' Turn not away,' reading *tasēr* for *taster*. This makes excellent sense.

Hide not, &c. : God's anger is the cause of the writer's distress.

And my bones are burned as a firebrand.
4 My heart is smitten like grass, and withered;
For I forget to eat my bread.
5 By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones cleave to my flesh.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am become as an owl of the waste places.
7 I watch, and am become

---

3. my bones are burned: in Job xxx. 30 of a sick man in fever: cf. xxxi. 10, xxxii. 3, lxix. 4. On the contrary, in a state of health and happiness the bones are said to spring up—to flourish, like young grass: see Isa. lxvi. 14.

firebrand: Heb. 'that which is burning,' and so 'what is rapidly coming to an end.' For **days** we should probably read 'bowels,' which makes a good parallel with **bones**: the difference in the Hebrew is slight. The word **days** came by mistake into this verse from verse 11. The verb rendered **are burned** denotes here a state of pain such as fire causes.

4. My heart: regarded as the centre and spring of life and as the reservoirs of the humours of the body.

smitten: as by sunstroke: see cxxi. 6; Isa. xlix. 10, and especially Hos. ix. 16 and Jonah iv. 1.

grass: Heb. 'herbage.'

and withered: 'and dried up': where there should be sap (blood, &c.), there is dryness.

For I forget: translate, 'surely I forget': the Hebrew can mean either.

5. The violent and prolonged straining of the voice causes the body to waste away: see xxxi. 10; Job iii. 24.

my flesh: render, 'my skin,' the sense of the Arabic cognate. The bones attach themselves to the skin, there is no flesh between, so emaciated is he: see Job xix. 20.

6. pelican: an unclean bird (Lev. xi. 18, &c.), not now met with in Palestine except in the neighbourhood of Lake Huleh. It is, according to Thompson, the most sombre and austere of birds.

owl: the small owl called *Athene meridionalis* is here meant according to Tristram. It is unclean (Lev. xi. 17, &c.) and delights to make its home in ruined deserted buildings, the meaning of **waste places.**

7. I watch: better, I am sleepless, I keep awake; see cxxvii. 1.

am become: read, 'and moan.'

Like a sparrow that is alone upon the housetop.
Mine enemies reproach me all the day; 8
They that are mad against me do curse by me.
For I have eaten ashes like bread, 9
And mingled my drink with weeping.
Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: 10
For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away.
My days are like a shadow that declineth; 11
And I am withered like grass.

But thou, O LORD, shalt abide for ever; 12

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sparrow: Heb. 'a small bird.'

alone: Thompson says that when one of these small birds has lost his mate 'he will sit on the housetop alone and lament by the hour.'

8. They that are mad against me: read (changing one vowel), 'They that make a fool of me,' 'that mock me' (Duhm).

do curse by me: as if they said, 'may your plight be as miserable as that of' (the speaker in this Psalm). See Isa. lxv. 15, &c. Contrast with this Gen. xxii. 18 ('shall bless themselves by thy seed').

9. See on lxxx. 5.

ashes: a symbol of mourning when thrown on the head: see Joshua vii. 6, &c. Cf. Job ii. 8; mourning took the place of eating.

And mingled my drink with weeping: i. e. with tears, and not, as formerly, with sweet and refreshing spices: see xlii. 3 and lxxx. 5.

10. Jehovah had in His sin-caused anger lifted them up to a high level of prosperity, only to hurl them down to their present degraded condition. The figure is that of a hurricane which first raises a man off his feet, and then throws him violently to the ground: see Job xxvii. 31.

cast me away: the Hebrew verb means primarily 'to throw down' (Gen. lvii. 22, &c.).

11. a shadow that declineth: rather, 'like a lengthening shadow'; shadows are shortest at noonday, becoming longer as the day wears on.

grass: Heb. 'herbage,' as in verse 4.

12–28. *The Psalmist's hope and confidence in God.* These verses constitute, perhaps, an independent Psalm. According to Duhm they differ much from the foregoing verses, but this may be

And thy memorial unto all generations.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
For it is time to have pity upon her, yea, the set time is come.

14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And have pity upon her dust.

15 So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD,

---

accounted for by the turning away of the writer from his own misery to the pity and faithfulness of Jehovah.

In verses 12-22 the Psalmist rejoices in the near prospect of a restored Zion, whose very stones and dust are dear to the Jew. Heathen nations and their kings, and also unborn Israelites, would acknowledge Jehovah on seeing what He will have done for the city.

12. This verse is from Lam. v. 19, 'throne' being changed to 'memorial.'

But thou: in Heb. 'Thou' is emphatic; render, 'But Thou—Thou O Jehovah,' &c. A strong contrast with the preceding is implied: 'My life is fast ebbing away' (verse 11), 'but Thou abidest,' &c.; see, however, next note.

shalt abide: better, 'sittest as king,' 'sittest enthroned.' The eternal kingship of Jehovah comes once more before us.

memorial: i. e. that by which one is remembered; so here God's revealed character. It has virtually the same sense as 'name,' with which it is parallel in cxxxv. 13, &c.

Thou abidest for ever as our King and as our God; cf. Browning's 'God 's in His heaven—All 's right with the world.'

13. have mercy: rather, 'pity,' 'compassionate.'

Zion = Jerusalem: see note p. 368.

to have pity upon: rather, 'to be gracious to.'

time: the word used in Eccles. iii. 1 ff.

set time: a time definitely set apart for some special purpose: especially of an annually recurring period, as of the feast days, Exod. xiii. 10, &c.

14. The fact that Jehovah's servants feel an affectionate interest in the very stones and dust of Jerusalem is a sign that God's appointed time of deliverance has arrived.

thy servants: see on lxxxvi. 2.

15-18. *When Jehovah has delivered His people, and restored Jerusalem and the temple, the heathen and their kings will acknowledge Him as the one true God.* Much in these verses reminds one of Isa. xl. ff.

15. See Isa. lix. 19, lx. 2 f.

And all the kings of the earth thy glory :
For the LORD hath built up Zion, 16
He hath appeared in his glory ;
He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, 17
And hath not despised their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come : 18
And a people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary ; 19
From heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;
To hear the sighing of the prisoner ; 20
To loose those that are appointed to death ;
That men may declare the name of the LORD in Zion, 21
And his praise in Jerusalem ;
When the peoples are gathered together, 22

16 For: render, 'When,' and continue the force of the word to the end of verse 17, translating verse 16 f. thus: 16. 'When Jehovah has built up Zion, (when) He has manifested Himself in His glory, 17. (when) He has turned to the prayer of the destitute, And not despised their prayer.'

18. This: i. e. what God is about to do : see verses 16 f.

written: we should now say 'printed.' Writing is referred to in Exod. xvii. 14, xxxiv. 27 ; Deut. xxxi. 19 ; Jer. xxx. 2.

the LORD: Heb. Jah (*Yah*) : see on lxxxix. 8.

Verses 19–22 are parallel to verses 16 f., and in each case 'When' must take the place of **For.** These verses do not contain a statement of fact as to what Jehovah *has* done, but continue the supposition of verse 16, which verse 18 interrupts : 'When Jehovah has looked,' &c.

19. For: render, 'When.'

the height of his sanctuary: render, 'His holy height' : 'heaven' is meant, as the parallelism shows.

20. those that are appointed to death: rather, 'those living a death-like life.' See on lxxix. 11, *lit.* 'sons of death.' The phrase is borrowed here from lxxix. 11.

21. That men: 'men' is not in the Hebrew, though the sense may be. As far as the original is concerned the **prisoners** and the 'sons of death' may be the subject of the verb : but we are probably to understand the peoples (kingdoms) in verse 22 as the subject : see verse 15.

22. Non-Jewish peoples and kingdoms will gather to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah.

And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years are throughout all generations.
25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth;
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure:

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23. In this verse the Psalmist returns to the complaining of verse 11.

He weakened: render, 'He brought down,' 'reduced.'

my strength: the written text (*keth.*) and the LXX have '*His* strength.' If this is followed, we must render 'His strength laid me low,' i. e. God used His strength to afflict him. But the other authorities have 'my strength.'

in the way: i. e. in the journey of life (Hupfeld, &c.), not in the journey through the wilderness or through the desert.

24. take me not away: Heb. 'take me not up,' assumed by practically all commentators (from Rashi downwards) to mean 'take me not away' (by death): yet the Hebrew verb (='to take up') never has that sense anywhere else. It is used, however, for 'to offer up as a sacrifice,' and that usage gives the best clue to the meaning here: 'Do not let me be put to death as animals are for sacrifice.'

Thy years, &c.: the eternal existence of God is used as a plea that God may not further shorten man's short life: Cheyne (2) thinks verses 25-27 a late insertion from a poem, the rest of which is lost. But God's eternal unchangeableness is quite naturally suggested by verse 24; cf. verses 11 f.

25-27 are applied to Christ in Heb. i. 10-12, the words being taken from the LXX. As originally written they refer to Jehovah as such: but those for whom the epistle was primarily written, being Jews, believed that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. The author argues with them on their own ground.

26. As compared with man the heavens and the hills are spoken of as everlasting; but in comparison with Jehovah they are but evanescent.

perish: not cease to exist, but cease to be what they are; perish as earth and heavens.

Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed :
But thou art the same, 27
And thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall continue, 28
And their seed shall be established before thee.

A Psalm of David. **103**

Bless the LORD, O my soul ; 1

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wax old: the Hebrew word (*balah*) is used of garments (Deut. viii. 4, xxix. 4), of bones (Ps. xxxii. 3), of a sick man (Job xiii. 28), of an aged and frail woman (Gen. xviii. 12).

shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: the same verb is twice used in Hebrew as in English, only in the original there is a word-play which English fails to reproduce. The Hebrew rendered 'shall be changed' = 'shall pass away'; the figure of the garment is now dropped.

28. Since God endures unchangeable, the permanent well-being of His servant is secured ; see Isa. lxv. 9, lxvi. 12.

thy servants: see on lxxxvi. 2.

shall continue: Heb. 'shall dwell,' i. e. in the land ; see lxix. 36.

before thee: see Ps. xvi. 11.

PSALM CIII.

Theme. The duty of praising Jehovah on account of His compassion and lovingkindness.

I. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist summons himself to praise Jehovah for His mercies (verses 1–5).

(2) Jehovah has revealed His pity and love (verses 6–12).

(3) Though man is weak and soon passes away, Jehovah is eternal (verses 13–18).

(4) Seeing God is universal King, the whole universe is summoned to praise Him (verses 19–22).

The thoughts of the Psalm are by no means sharply separated : the writer is carried along by the dominating thought—the infinite goodness of Jehovah—and he is not careful to observe logical sequence. It is one of the most beautiful of the Psalms, alike in its thought and in its pathos, though less profound than some. The writer is too comfortably situated to think or feel deeply.

And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm seems to voice the gratitude of the writer and of his fellow countrymen, in view of some recent national deliverance, but whether that is the deliverance from Babylon or from the Syrian army, or whether some other national blessing is meant, must, with our present knowledge, remain uncertain.

In verses 1-5 the writer speaks in the singular, as he is uttering his own thoughts. In verses 6 f. he falls into the plural under the influence of the feeling that his sentiments are shared by others.

Psalms 103 f. seem to go together, and had perhaps one author. The self-urging to praise occurs only in these two Psalms (see verses 1-5 and 22, and Ps. civ. 1, 35).

1-5. *Jehovah to be praised for His mercies.*

1. my soul: i. e. 'myself': see on lxxviii. 18, cvii. 18.

all that is within me = 'my whole self,' 'my entire personality.'

his holy name = Him as being holy. 'Name' here is almost equal to the pronoun: see on lxxix. 9.

2. And forget not all: for 'all' substitute 'any'; or, render, 'And forget none of His benefits'; this is what the Hebrew means.

3. iniquities: Heb. 'iniquity' in the singular. The idea in the word is 'perversity,' 'crookedness'; 'that which is twisted from the right.'

diseases: or 'sicknesses': the Hebrew word occurs in the plural only; it is found also in Deut. xxix. 21, &c.

The Psalmist had received both moral and physical blessings: pardon and bodily healing.

4. thy life = thy own self: see on verse 1. The word 'life' has often the sense 'self' or 'soul,' 'heart,' &c.

destruction: Heb. 'the pit': it stands for Sheol, which is here pictured as claiming the Psalmist when he was on the point of dying: but Jehovah quashed the claim; paid, as it were, the ransom, and so brought him back to life and health; 'redeem' or 'ransom' is here used figuratively. See Hos. xiii. 14, and cf. Gen. xlviii. 16; Lam. iii. 58. On the verb 'redeem' (*ga'al*) used here see on lxxiv. 2.

crowneth thee: the same figure in Prov. iii. 3; cf. viii. 5.

Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender
mercies:
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; 5
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.
The LORD executeth righteous acts, 6
And judgements for all that are oppressed.
He made known his ways unto Moses, 7
His doings unto the children of Israel.
The LORD is full of compassion and gracious, 8
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
He will not always chide; 9

tender mercies: better, 'compassions.'

5. thy mouth: read, 'thy desire,' making a slight change in the Hebrew. The word in the M. T. means 'thy ornament,' by which 'thy soul' may be meant, just as 'glory' stands for soul: see on cviii. 1.

is renewed: rather, 'renews itself.'

like the eagle: as the eagle renews its feathers: see Isa. xl. 31.

6-12. *Jehovah's gracious dealings.*

6. righteous acts: acts which display the Divine righteousness in keeping the terms of His covenant: so = 'saving acts.' In Isa. xl ff. 'righteousness' means virtually 'deliverance,' for it involves it.

judgements: here = 'acts of deliverance' involving His judgement on the heathen.

7. He made known: Heb. 'He continually made known' (impf. tense).

his ways: not those in which God commands men to walk, but His modes of action: the parallel expression **his doings** has the same meaning.

children of Israel: we should say Israelites in English: see on lxxxix. 6.

8. full of compassion and gracious: Heb. 'very compassionate and very gracious.' The adjectives are intensive in form. This verse is taken with unimportant alterations from Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Slow to anger = 'longsuffering.'

9. See Isa. lvii. 16; Jer. iii. 12. This verse is an echo of the former.

chide: i. e. 'contend.' There are times when the long-

Neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.
10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
13 Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
14 For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
15 As for man, his days are as grass;

---

suffering God has to seem to be in conflict with His people: but that time comes to an end.

Neither will he keep *his anger*, &c.: 'his anger' is not in the Hebrew, and we should probably render, 'Nor for ever will He keep strict watch'; so Kay. See Jer. iii. 5, 12; Neh. i. 2; Job xiii. 27.

10. See Ezra ix. 13.

sins: though according to etymology the Hebrew word means 'a missing the mark' as the Greek word *hamartia*, yet in usage it is specially used for sin as guilt, as deserving and involving punishment: see li. 7; Deut. xv. 9, xxi. 22, xxiv. 16, &c.

For **iniquities** see on verse 3.

11. For **toward** read 'above,' changing one letter for another like it. Render 11^b: 'So high is His lovingkindness above (the merits of) those who fear Him.' So Hupfeld, &c.

12. See Isa. xxxviii. 17; Mic. vii. 19.

east: *lit.* sunrise: **west:** *lit.* sunset.

transgressions: or, according to the root idea, 'rebellions': but it is the guilt or penalty that the word here imports, as in v. 11, xix. 14, lix. 4

13-18. *Man frail and transitory, but Jehovah's lovingkindness everlasting.*

14. our frame: the noun is that derived from the verb used in Gen. ii. 7, 'And Jehovah God *formed* man of the dust of the ground,' and there is a reference here to that passage. He knows that we are made out of dust, and that we have the marks of our low origin—'of the earth earthy.'

15. See xc. 5 ff.; Isa. xl. 6 ff.; Job xiv. 2.

man: not man in his frailty: 'man at his best' would be

As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; 16
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to ever- 17
lasting upon them that fear him,
And his righteousness unto children's children ;
To such as keep his covenant, 18
And to those that remember his precepts to do them.
The LORD hath established his throne in the heavens ; 19
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the LORD, ye angels of his : 20
Ye mighty in strength, that fulfil his word,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.

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nearer the original : the Hebrew word is the poetical equivalent of man = Latin *vir* : see on xc. 3. The word means perhaps 'man as a sociable being,' from a root in Arabic = 'to be sociable.'

as grass : so few.

he flourisheth : better, keeping the noun form, 'so he flowers.' Man 'flowers like a flower,' i. e. soon to fade away. His time of full maturity is but short at best.

16. Render : 'For the wind passes through it (the flower), and it is gone ; so his (man's) place knows him no more.'

The east wind is very dry and blighting in Palestine.

16 is taken from Job vii. 10.

The place where man lives is personified : it has no further acquaintance with him. The place and the man are utterly and for ever strangers. In Arabic poems, as in Wordsworth's *Excursion*, sad thoughts are awakened by the remembrance of former occupants of deserted abodes.

18. See Exod. xx. 3.

19-22. *Since Jehovah is universal King* (19), *He should receive universal praise* (20 ff.).

19. Jehovah has made firm His throne in heaven, where are none of those commotions which overturn kings and kingdoms. This verse contains the reason for the exhortations in the following verses.

20–22. The celestial beings of varying grades and functions are called upon to praise God. First, the angels are named as being highest ; they are represented as mighty heroes, and as executing His commands. Then follow His hosts, the subordinate members

21 Bless the LORD, all ye his hosts;
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all ye his works,
In all places of his dominion:
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

104 Bless the LORD, O my soul.

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of the company that wait upon God. Then in verse 23 the works of nature are commanded to join in the chorus.

Translate verses 20 f. as follows:

'Bless Jehovah ye His angels,
Mighty heroes, who execute His command (word),
Listening to the voice of His command (word).
Bless Jehovah all ye His hosts, ministrants of His, who do His will.'

PSALM CIV.

Theme. Jehovah's goodness as revealed in the creation of the world calls for praise.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's majesty as displayed in nature (verses 1–4).

(2) The creation of the earth. The separation of land and water (verses 5–9).

(3) Springs and brooks created: the earth then yields food for man and beast (verses 10–18).

(4) Creation of sun, moon and stars (verses 19–23).

(5) Expression of wonder at the variety of God's works, and the wisdom they show (verse 24).

(6) Description of the sea and its occupants (verses 25–30).

(7) Conclusion: praises and vows (verses 31–35).

The author in this Psalm gives a charming and highly poetical version of the creation-story as told in Gen. i, ii. 3, drawing also upon Deuteronomy, Isa. xl ff., Job, and other Psalms. In Ps. ciii Jehovah is praised for the love He has revealed in the facts of history: in this Psalm for what He has revealed of His character in the creation and sustenance of the universe.

Though this Psalm has much in it that recalls the cosmogonies of other ancient nations, notably the Babylonian creation-myth, it stands apart from other nature poems of non-biblical religions by the ruling place which it gives to the one only God, and the exalted view which it contains of His character.

Hebrew Cosmology (see *Genesis*, Century Bible [Bennett], p. 68). According to Hebrew conceptions the universe is a large

O LORD my God, thou art very great ;
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment ; 2

house made by, and primarily for, Jehovah, having three stories ; heaven (the upper), earth (the middle) and Sheol (the lowest). The firmament is a solid vault (in Homer of bronze and of iron), serving for earth's covering and heaven's basement (Exod. xxiv. 10) ; it rests on pillars which are fixed on the earth (Job xxvi. 11). Above this firmament are the waters corresponding to the subterranean watery abyss (Gen. i. 7) ; on these upper waters dwell Jehovah and superhuman beings of varying grades (ciii. 19 ff.). Within the earth, but lower down than man's abode, is Sheol. Underneath the earth is the abyss of waters on which the earth was supposed to rest ; see xxiv. 2, cxxxv. 6, cxxxvi. 6 ; Gen. i. 6 f., vii. 11 ; Exod. xx. 4.

It is a strong and striking testimony to the divinity of Israel's religion, that though the nation's conception of the universe was so naïve and childish, its thoughts of God were on the highest plane. The religious elevation of the present Psalm is quite inexplicable, unless we allow this simple folk to have been specially guided from above.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The resemblances between Pss. ciii and civ have led most authors to trace both to a common author. The present Psalm has manifest marks of late date in the use made of other Scripture, and in particular of the Priestly Document of the Pentateuch (P).

The variety of verbal forms (perf., partic.) and of persons are due to a lively and rich imagination, such as shows itself in a similar way in Arabic poetry.

1–4. *Jehovah's majesty in creation.*

1. thou art very great : render : 'Thou didst show thyself very great.'

art clothed : render : 'didst clothe thyself.'

2–4. *Creation of light* (Gen. i. 3–5), *and of the heavens* (Gen. i. 6–8).

2. Who coverest thyself with light : better, 'Who didst cover,' or 'Who coveredst' : and so with the other verbs in verses 1–4. In Hebrew they are participles, and take on the tense of the verbs in verse 1. **Light** was created on the first day, but it was the light that is not seen on sea or land, the light in which God dwells (Gen. i. 3) : the sun, &c. were created to supply the other light.

Note the different treatment of the facts of creation here and in Genesis. In the history God made light ; in the poem He puts it on Him as a royal garment.

Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :
3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ;
Who maketh the clouds his chariot ;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind :
4 Who maketh winds his messengers ;
His ministers a flaming fire :
5 Who laid the foundations of the earth,

See how sharply Jehovah is distinguished from the light, perhaps as a polemic against Zoroastrianism, which says 'God is light' or 'fire'; see 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John i. 5.

Who stretchest: better, 'who didst stretch,' or 'who stretchedst.' The earth is compared with a tent, its covering being the firmament; see Isa. xl. 22.

3. Render: 'who lays the beams (=framework) of His chambers (=dwelling) on the waters,' &c.

chambers: *lit.* 'upper (rooms).' The word is used for the room built on the flat roofs of oriental houses, sometimes slept in (1 Kings xvii. 19–23; 2 Kings iv. 10), but generally used for social purposes in the cool of the evening. Jehovah's abode is a kind of upper room to the earth. The plural **chambers** is parallel to 'house' in Jer. xxii. 13 f., and in the latter and present passages has that sense : i. e. the house made up of rooms.

Jehovah's many (upper)-roomed house is based on the waters above the firmament, as the earth rests on the waters below. Another conception seems to have floated before the minds of Bible writers, according to which God's throne and dwelling are immediately on the solid firmament: see Exod. xxiv. 10; Ezek. i. 26; cf. Amos ix. 9.

Who maketh the clouds his chariot: see Isa. xix. 1.

Who walketh upon the wings of the wind: see xviii. 11.

Probably some mythological allusions lie in these words; but the general meaning is clear : the forces of nature are subject to His will : see next verse. Superhuman beings are often thought of in ancient mythology as having wings; see on xci. 4.

4. Render :

> 'Who makes winds His messengers,
> And flaming (or blazing) fire His ministers.'

fire: the lightning is meant; the Hebrew word has no plural or it would probably have been used: **winds** and lightning are personified.

5. The earth firmly established; see Job xxxviii. 6; Prov. viii. 29.

That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture; 6
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled; 7
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away;
They went up by the mountains, they went down by the 8
valleys,
Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; 9

By the **pillars** nothing in particular is indicated: they stand in a general way for God's means of supporting the world.

In the controversy with Galileo this verse was much quoted.

6-9. *The earth separated from the ocean which covered it.* The language of this section is suggested by the ancient Babylonian creation-myth, not by the account of the Deluge in Genesis.

The Hebrew word for deep, *Tehom*, is the same word as that used in Babylonian (*Tiamat*) for the sea monster, the Rahab, the Leviathan as it is variously called. See on lxxiv. 13 f., and on lxxxvii. 3.

In verses 6-9 the tenses of the verbs are carefully chosen and are strikingly suggestive. The two verbs describing God's acts are perfect, with an historical (aorist) meaning: 'Thou *coveredst* it' (the earth) (verse 6), '(the place which) thou *foundedst*' (verse 8), 'Thou didst set a bound' (verse 9). All the other verbs are imperfects, expressing the continued operation of natural agents; 'the waters were standing' (verse 6), 'fleeing,' 'hurrying away in alarm' (verse 7), 'the mountains were rising' (verse 8), &c.

Verses 8 and 9 seem to have changed places; verse 9 refers to the waters of verse 7 and not to the mountains of verse 8. A copyist is probably responsible for the error.

6. The all-pervading ocean is here conceived of as *due* to God, and not, as in the Babylonian myth, as *defying* God; but see verse 7.

7. At thy rebuke: this word suggests that the waters were once disobedient.

the voice of thy thunder: rather, 'Thy thunder-like voice.'

8. This verse says what took place after God had set for the water the bounds beyond which they should not pass (verse 9). It seems evident that this verse should follow verse 9.

They went up, &c.: render: 'The mountains rose, the valleys sank to the place' &c.

That they turn not again to cover the earth.
10 He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
They run among the mountains:
11 They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild asses quench their thirst.
12 By them the fowl of the heaven have their habitation,
They sing among the branches.
13 He watereth the mountains from his chambers:
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

10-18. *Springs and brooks created.*

10. He sendeth, &c.: better, 'who sends.'

The Genesis account of Creation is silent as to the making of **springs.** After the dry land (earth) was separated from the 'waters under the heaven,' God commanded the earth to put forth grass (third day): see Gen. i. 9-13. The Psalmist thinks of the springs as made before the rain (verse 13) and as having an existence independent of the rain. It is poetry, not science, that we have here.

valleys: rather, 'wadies': valleys like Kedron into which torrents flow in the winter, but which are quite dry in the summer. The same Hebrew word is used for the torrent as well as for its channel.

Ewald and others render: 'Who sends forth springs into torrents (or brooks).' But 'torrent beds' are probably meant here.

Nothing is said in the Psalm about rivers, because Palestine has but one river—the Jordan, and that is too rapid and deep to be of much immediate service to man or beast.

11. No mention is made of man's quenching his thirst at these torrents, because this is a poem and not a scientific treatise. Perhaps the omission is due to the fact that man quenches his thirst otherwise, as from springs direct, by means of wine, &c.

12. Birds make their home and sing their songs in the branches of trees that grow beside the wadies.

By them: i. e. the torrents, not, as Baethgen thinks, 'by' or 'besides the wild asses,' though LXX, Jero. support this last.

sing: Heb. 'give forth (their) voice.'

branches: better, 'foliage'; LXX has 'rocks.'

13. Jehovah in his abode (see on verse 3) causes the rain to descend from the waters above the firmament. The **chambers** are God's dwelling, not rain reservoirs.

is satisfied with: or 'has its fill from.'

the fruit of thy works: i. e. rain thought of as the issue or product of God's work (sing. not pl. 'works,' though Hebrew can

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, 14
And herb for the service of man ;
That he may bring forth food out of the earth :
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, 15
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread that strengtheneth man's heart.
The trees of the LORD are satisfied ; 16

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mean either). Delitzsch and Kirkpatrick think that vegetation is meant, but this is mentioned in the next verse, and parallelism shows that rain is here intended.

The text of verses 14 f. has become somewhat confused. I suggest such changes as will justify the following rendering—they have to do mainly with the rearrangement of words: 'Who causes grass to grow for cattle, and herbage for man's use : so as to bring forth out of the earth bread that supports man's heart, and wine that gladdens man's heart, and oil that makes (the) face shine.' Nothing is said about God's providing flesh-food for man : in the East it is still seldom eaten.

14. See Gen. i. 11.

herb : the Hebrew word embraces all products of the earth except large trees (verse 16) : here it includes wheat (bread), the vine (wine), and the olive-tree (oil) which, as a small tree, is subsumed under 'herbs.'

for the service (=use) **of man :** the Hebrew can mean 'as a reward for man's labour.' Some take the words to mean (herbs) 'that man may labour for' (=to produce) 'them.'

food : Heb. 'bread.' The three main products of Palestine are named : (1) wheat for bread ; (2) the vine, yielding wine ; and (3) the olive-tree, which supplies valuable food (olive berries and oil) and a most refreshing cosmetic (oil).

15. wine: seldom used now in Palestine, as the Quran condemns its use. Coffee is the commonest beverage, moca coffee, sugarless and milkless.

oil : olive oil is meant—the head was cooled and the body refreshed by having this oil applied.

to make his face to shine : read, 'which' (the oil) 'makes,' &c. Oil poured on the head runs down the cheeks and thus makes the face shine.

And bread, &c. : this clause has its right place at the close of verse 14 : see my translation above. Pliny says that two liquids are most gratifying to men's bodies : oil—without, and wine—within.

16. The trees of the LORD : render, 'large trees' : see on lxxx. 11.

The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;
17 Where the birds make their nests:
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
The rocks are a refuge for the conies.
19 He appointed the moon for seasons:
The sun knoweth his going down.
20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
21 The young lions roar after their prey,

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are satisfied: or 'have their fill,' have what they need, here rain (see on verse 13).

17. birds: the Hebrew word = 'small birds,' such as the sparrow.

stork: the Hebrew word = 'loving,' 'kind'; it is thought to be so called on account of its affection for its young. Classical writers have often pointed out this characteristic.

18. After noticing the tall trees in which birds dwell (16 f.), the Psalmist passes naturally to the high mountains on which animals make their home.

wild goats: *lit.* 'climbers': render, 'mountain goats.'

The rocks: Heb. 'crags.'

conies: neither rabbits nor conies are meant, for the animals here spoken of dwell among rocks (see also Prov. xxx. 26).

19–23. *Creation of the heavenly bodies. The work of the fourth day* (Gen. i. 14).

19. The ancients measured time by the phases of the moon much more than we do, as clocks and watches were unknown to them. The moon is named before the sun because the Hebrews began the day with the evening.

The sun knoweth: we must alter the Hebrew word slightly, and render, 'He makes the sun know.'

going down: *lit.* 'going in.' We speak of 'sunrise' and 'sunset': the Hebrews spoke of 'going out' and 'entering in'—the latter pair having a mythological origin.

20. Render: 'When darkness comes on, it is night, In which every beast of the forest creeps (forth).'

The second person, 'thou makest,' &c. is quite unsuitable here: the very same form of the verb is used as a feminine to express the occurrence of natural phenomena ('it rains,' 'snows,' &c.). The feminine expresses the neuter in Semitic because, as in Keltic, no distinct neuter exists.

21. The roar of the lion is, to God, a prayer.

And seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, they get them away, 22
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work 23
And to his labour until the evening.
O LORD, how manifold are thy works! 24
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
The earth is full of thy riches.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide, 25
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.

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22. Render: 'When the sun arises, they retreat, Go to their lairs and stretch themselves in them.'

And lay, &c: the Hebrew expression is pregnant, its force being brought out in the above translation. In Durham and other English counties one often hears 'He is into the house' ('into 't 'oos').

23. work: skilled labour is probably meant.

labour: tilling the land is what seems intended.

24. The variety of Jehovah's works and the wisdom they display.

riches: the Hebrew word means here, 'what God has created': so='creatures' (as R.Vm.).

25-30. *The sea and its occupants.*

25. Render: 'Yonder is the sea, great and wide on both sides, Wherein are moving' (*lit.* 'creeping') 'things innumerable: Living creatures, alike small and great.'

Yonder: the rendering 'this . . . sea,' favoured by LXX, Jero. and defended by Delitzsch and Cheyne (1), is excluded by the Hebrew.

wide: Heb. 'wide on both hands,' i. e. extending far to the right and to the left. See Gen. xxxiv. 21, &c.

If with Dean Stanley we think of the author as writing the present Psalm on Mount Lebanon, these words and other allusions would be very suitable: 'Yonder—before me—is the Mediterranean Sea' (the only sea known to most Israelites) 'great and stretching out far to the right (north) and to the left (south).'

small and great beasts: translate: 'great and small living creatures. The Hebrew word rendered 'beasts' means first of all 'a living thing,' then 'a wild beast,' in contrast with domesticated animals or cattle (*behemah*).

26 There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.
27 These wait all upon thee,
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.
28 That thou givest unto them they gather;
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.
29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created;
And thou renewest the face of the ground.
31 Let the glory of the LORD endure for ever;

---

26. In verse 25 we are told what was *in* the sea—'innumerable moving creatures.' In this verse the poet tells us what could be seen *above* the sea, viz. ships and whales: the whale is undoubtedly meant by **leviathan.** He is often as conspicuous on the face of the Mediterranean as the craft.

to take his pastime therein: this rendering is grammatically possible, and is supported by Job xl. 20. But Job xli. 5 (in the Heb. xl. 29) and the connexion favour R.Vm. '(which thou hast formed) to play with him.' It is God's power that is magnified. He is so wonderful in might that He plays with the sea monster as men do with animal pets.

27 f. is based on Gen. i. 29 f. (sixth day).

In verses 28-30 the sentences are all conditional, though, as often in Hebrew, the conditional particles are lacking.

28. Render: '(What) Thou givest to them, they gather: When Thou openest Thy hand, they get their fill of good (things).'

29. The hiding of God's face means the withdrawal of His care; see Job xxxiv. 15, &c.

30. The bodily part of man is ignored as comparatively unimportant; His life is a result of the Divine breathing forth. The conception is of course theocentric and poetical.

thou renewest: after the death of winter thou makest the land to swarm with new life.

31–35. *Prayers, praises and vows, put together from various sources, and standing in loose connexion.* The author in these verses returns to the thoughts with which he set out, a procedure followed in other Psalms of the kind: see xlv. 17, lxxii. 17, &c.

Let the LORD rejoice in his works:
Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; 32
He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.
I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: 33
I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.
Let my meditation be sweet unto him: 34
I will rejoice in the LORD.
Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, 35
And let the wicked be no more.
Bless the LORD, O my soul.
Praise ye the LORD.

O give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name **105**

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31. Let the LORD rejoice in his works: an allusion to Gen. i. 3; cf. Prov. viii. 31.

32. A mere glance from God causes earthquake: see Exod. xix. 18; Amos ix. 5. His touch turns the mountain into a volcano.

Perhaps some recent earthquake gave force and vividness to the words in 32[a] when written.

33 = cxlvi. 2 (with hardly any difference). Note the underlying thought: once men are dead there is an end of all praising. This Psalmist knows nothing of the heaven of the Apocalypse with its harps and hallelujahs.

34. sweet: 'acceptable,' 'pleasing,' see xix. 15. The word rendered 'sweet' is used of an acceptable sacrifice: see Jer. vi. 20; Hos. ix. 4.

35. Render: 'So that all men may unite in one song of praise to Jehovah, let sinners (= the wicked) be entirely removed out of the earth.' That would have been a great removing which issued in leaving on the earth those only who, at that time, bowed the knee to Jehovah alone.

At the close of Ps. cxxxix (which resembles the present Psalm in many features) there is also a prayer that Jehovah may execute vengeance on the wicked: see on cxxxix. 19 ff.

Praise ye the LORD: Heb. 'Hallelujah,' i. e. 'Praise ye Jah' (*Yah*). See for 'Jah' on lxxxix. 8 and for 'Hallelujah' on 'Hallelujah Psalms,' p. 226.

PSALM CV.

Theme. Jehovah to be praised for his faithfulness to Israel in the past.

Make known his doings among the peoples.

I. *Title.* The Hebrew has none. In the LXX 'Hallelujah' acts as title to this Psalm, instead of being attached to Ps. civ. This is no doubt its proper place, the 'Hallelujah' with which the present Psalm closes being that with which Ps. cvi begins, repeated by mistake. Probably 'Hallelujah' was the rallying word uttered by the precentor or by some one specially appointed when a Psalm was about to be sung. A modern choir-leader would strike his baton for the same purpose.

II. *Contents.* (1) The summoning of the people to praise Jehovah (verses 1–6) for His fidelity to the covenant made by Him with the fathers (verses 7–11).

(2) Jehovah's care over the patriarchs during their migrations in Canaan and in Egypt (verses 12–22).

(3) His protection of His people when the Egyptians oppressed them (verses 23–36).

(4) His goodness in delivering Israel in Egypt, in providing for them in the wilderness, and in bringing them safely to the promised land (verses 37–45).

Noteworthy in this Psalm is the prominence given to the residence in Egypt and to the Joseph tribe. This last at least suggests north Israel influence.

This is the first of the group of 'Hodu Psalms' (Pss. cv–cvii), so called because they open with *hodu* = 'O give thanks.'

III. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. cv and cvi are older than Chronicles (i. e. than B. C. 250), since parts of both Psalms are appropriated as part of a Psalm ascribed to David in 1 Chron. xvi. It is only the desire to make the Psalm Maccabean that led Hitzig to regard verses 1–15 of the present Psalm as an extract from 1 Chron. xvi, and Duhm to deny the genuineness of 1 Chron. xvi. 8–36. On the other hand, the universalism of the Psalm, its looking back to the past for encouragement, the use made of other Scriptures, especially of the Priestly Code (say B. C. 450), and some Aramaisms (see verse 18) show that the Psalm is late.

The prosperous days of Nehemiah's time would suit the Psalm, but so would many other periods.

Pss. lxxviii and cvi are also retrospective, but the burden of these songs is the unfaithfulness of Israel in the past. In the present Psalm it is the Divine goodness which is alone recalled.

The Pentateuch, or rather Hexateuch, sources, J (or JE) and P, are both used by our Psalmist.

Verses 1–15 occur in 1 Chron. xvi. 8–22.

1–6. *Praise to be given to Jehovah.*

1. This verse is loaned from Isa. xii. 4.

Sing unto him, sing praises unto him;
Talk ye of all his marvellous works.
Glory ye in his holy name:
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
Seek ye the LORD and his strength;
Seek his face evermore.
Remember his marvellous works that he hath done;
His wonders, and the judgements of his mouth;
O ye seed of Abraham his servant,
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

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give thanks: the Hebrew word (*lit.* 'to hurl,' 'throw') means both 'to give thanks to' and 'to praise': see on xcv. 2.

call upon his name: this does not mean 'to pray,' but 'to celebrate the attributes of God': 'to bear witness to God's revealed character': see Exod. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5 f.: cf. Deut. xxxii. 3.

2. sing praises: the Hebrew can mean, and probably does here mean, 'play' (on the harp or lyre); 'make melody' would preserve the ambiguity of the Hebrew. But probably two different things are meant by the two verbs in 2[a].

his marvellous works: see on xcvi. 3.

3. See Isa. xli. 16.

his holy name = 'His holy character.'

4. seek: the first Hebrew verb is the one used for seeking knowledge: it is cognate with 'midrash'; the second is used of seeking for something that is lost. Perhaps the parallelism is alone responsible for the employment of two verbs here, the same idea being intended by both.

5. Remember: a command occurring fifteen times in Deuteronomy.

marvellous works: see on xcvi. 3.

His wonders: the same Hebrew word is used of the plagues in Egypt: Exod. vii. 3, xi. 9; Joshua iii. 3.

the judgements of his mouth: i. e. the judicial verdicts pronounced by Him regarding the Egyptians: Exod. vi. 6, vii. 4, xii. 12.

6. Abraham: in 1 Chron. xvi. 13 'Israel.'

his servant: referring to Abraham: see on lxxviii. 70. But we should probably read 'servants' (plural) as in the LXX and Targ. (not the Pesh. as Baethgen mistakenly says), and as in the LXX of 1 Chron. xvi. 13. 'His servants' would then be parallel to **his chosen ones.**

7 He is the LORD our God:
His judgements are in all the earth.
8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever,
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
9 *The covenant* which he made with Abraham,
And his oath unto Isaac;
10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
To Israel for an everlasting covenant:
11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,

7–11. *Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant.*

7. He is the LORD our God: render: 'He, Jehovah, is our God.'

His judgements: same meaning as in verse 5: but here their sphere is enlarged, for all the world is now included.

8. hath remembered: better, 'remembers.' In Hebrew mental operations are conceived as states which continue.

his covenant: referring to Gen. xv. 18, xvii. 24; Exod. xxiv. Here it is the Divine side of the transaction that is thought of: the promises made conditionally by God. The conception of a covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel is not older than the Deuteronomic legislation, say B. C. 620.

commanded: rather, 'confirmed,' the original sense of the Hebrew word. So in Exod. xviii. 23.

to a thousand generations: belongs to 'He remembers,' and is parallel to **for ever.** 'Thousand' means here a large number.

9. (which he) **made:** Heb. 'cut.' In Hebrew as in Latin (*ferire, icĕre*), and partly in Greek (*temno horkia*), to 'cut a covenant' is the idiom, because a covenant was ratified by a sacrifice: see Gen. xv

his oath unto Isaac: Gen. xxvi. 3: the phrase depends on 'He remembers.'

10. And confirmed the same: render: 'and which (covenant) He appointed.'

unto Jacob: see Gen. xxviii. 13, xxxv. 9.

a statute: a fixed, unchangeable decree.

Jacob: Israel: though these two names are identical in the later history they were originally distinct, each with a cluster of separate traditions, all which are united in the Jacob or Israel of the later literature. The traditional (J) explanation of the double name is given in Gen. xxxii. 26–28.

11. The words of the promise are quoted.

The lot of your inheritance:
When they were but a few men in number; 12
Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;
And they went about from nation to nation, 13
From one kingdom to another people.
He suffered no man to do them wrong; 14
Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;
Saying, Touch not mine anointed ones, 15
And do my prophets no harm.

The lot of your inheritance: render: 'the land of your inheritance,' and see on lxxviii. 55.

The covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob embraced in its reach their descendants.

12-22. *How God guided the patriarchs in their wanderings.*

12. When they were: the 'they' refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; hardly, however, as individuals, but as representing peoples. Amos used the words Isaac, Jacob, and Israel invariably as names of tribes or peoples.

but a few men in number: *lit.* 'men of number,' i. e. men that could be numbered = 'few.' Cf. Horace, 'Nos numerus sumus.' See Gen. xxxiv, Deut. xxvi. 5. For the antithetic phrase innumerable (Heb. 'without number') see Ps. xl. 12, &c. These words show that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob cannot here denote the individuals so called, for it would not be said of them that they were **few men in number**: they were but three, and these three were not alive at the same time.

sojourners: Heb. *ger*: see on cxix. 19.

13. Render: 'And when they were going about,' &c.; a continuation of the conditional sentence in verse 12: the apodosis is in verses 14 f.

14. he reproved kings: referring to Sarah and Rebecca and the way they were rescued from Pharaoh and Abimelech; see Gen. xii. 7, xx. 3, 7, 18, xxvi. 11.

15. Touch not, &c.: an allusion to Gen. xxvi. 11.

mine anointed ones: the Hebrew is the word rendered 'Messiah'; 'my messiahs.' Kings and priests were set apart for their office by the anointing of oil. The fathers of the nation were called apart to be themselves consecrated and the founders of a consecrated people: see on lxxxix. 20, and see also pp. 7 f.

prophets: Abraham is called a prophet in Gen. xx. 7 (E); but, as applied to Amos, Isaiah, &c., the word has a different

16 And he called for a famine upon the land;
He brake the whole staff of bread.
17 He sent a man before them;
Joseph was sold for a servant:
18 His feet they hurt with fetters;
He was laid in *chains of* iron:
19 Until the time that his word came to pass;

---

meaning. Here the sense is simply that God revealed Himself through Abraham.

16-22. *What led Jacob into Egypt (the famine). Joseph's history briefly and poetically treated.*

16. In Hebrew co-ordination of sentences is used where subordination of ideas is meant, and where in other languages subordination would be expressed. This is evident to the reader of the English Bible. We might translate verse 16: 'So when He called,' &c.

he called: a common expression in the O.T.; see 2 Kings viii. 1; Amos v. 8, vii. 4, ix. 6; Hag. i. 11.

staff of bread: a case of what is called 'Genitive of apposition'; the bread *is* the staff: that which men lean on; see Lev. xxvi. 26: Isa. iii. 1; Ps. civ. 15.

17. See Gen. xlv. 5, 7.

a man: i. e. Joseph.

servant: better, 'a bondservant' or 'slave,' though the latter includes too much.

18. All we are told in Gen. xl. 3 with reference to Joseph's incarceration is that he was 'bound' in the prison. The details given in this verse are probably due to the poet's transference of prison conditions, as he knew them, to the imprisonment of Joseph.

He was laid in *chains of* iron: *lit.* 'His soul' (= He himself) 'entered the iron' (= irons). 'Iron,' though singular, has a plural meaning, in harmony with Hebrew usage. It is in parallelism with the Hebrew word for **fetters**, which is also singular in the original. Hence it = 'iron fetters,' 'chains,' or the like. 'He entered the iron chains or fetters' = 'he was bound by them,' or 'in them.'

The rendering 'the iron entered his soul' (so LXX, Targ., most Jewish and many Christian exegetes) is excluded by grammar and sense.

19. word: the second of the two Hebrew nouns so translated in this verse denotes especially a Divine utterance, command, or promise. **His word** means Joseph's interpretation of his own dreams.

The word of the LORD tried him.
The king sent and loosed him; 20
Even the ruler of peoples, and let him go free.
He made him lord of his house, 21
And ruler of all his substance:
To bind his princes at his pleasure, 22
And teach his senators wisdom.
Israel also came into Egypt; 23
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
And he increased his people greatly, 24
And made them stronger than their adversaries.
He turned their heart to hate his people, 25

The word of the LORD means the same thing, for it was Jehovah who gave Joseph the interpretation.

tried him: Jehovah's word to Joseph called for faith, and so tested him.

20. The king sent, &c.: see Gen. xli. 14.

loosed: Heb. 'set free.'

21. See xli. 40, xlv. 8.

22. Render: 'That he might instruct princes according to his good pleasure, And impart wisdom to his elders.'

bind: read, 'instruct,' changing one Hebrew consonant. This is supported by parallelism, LXX, Jero., and Duhm.

at his pleasure: read, with LXX, Jero., 'according to his pleasure': two very similar letters (*b* and *k*) are confounded here as elsewhere.

wisdom: see Gen. xli. 39.

23–25. *How God protected the Israelites in Egypt.*

23. Mizraim (= Egypt) and Ham stand in parallelism here as in lxxviii. 51. In verse 27 Egypt is called the land of Ham. According to Gen. x. 6 Mizraim is son of Ham; another son is Cush (Ethiopia): proof surely that the names in Gen. x are tribal, not individual; see on verse 12.

Israel = Jacob; see on verse 10.

24. And he: i. e. Jehovah.

than their adversaries: read, 'stronger than the Egyptians.'

25–39 is based on Exod. i–xiv.

25. He turned their heart: render: 'their heart turned.' The Hebrew verb has often, as in lxxviii. 9 and here, an intransitive meaning. For the sentiment see Exod. i. 8.

To deal subtilly with his servants.
26 He sent Moses his servant,
And Aaron whom he had chosen.
27 They set among them his signs,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made it dark;
And they rebelled not against his words.
29 He turned their waters into blood,
And slew their fish.
30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
In the chambers of their kings.

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27. They set: read with the ancient versions (except Targ.) and with most moderns 'He set': see lxxviii. 43; Exod. x. 2.

From verse 24 to verse 37 Jehovah is the subject.

among them: as in Exod. x. 2: but in lxxviii. 43 'in Egypt.'

his signs: Heb. 'words or things of His signs,' i. e. 'instances of His signs'; then virtually 'some of His signs.' This noun has the same idiomatic sense in lxv. 4, cxxxvii. 2, cxlv. 5, and Jer. v. 28 ('deeds of wickedness').

wonders: see on verse 5.

28–36 *gives an account of the plagues, but only eight are mentioned, and these not in chronological order.*

The fifth plague (pestilence) and the sixth (boils) are omitted: the remaining eight are alluded to in the following order:—

(1) The ninth (darkness). (2) The first (Nile water changed into blood). (3) The second (frogs). (4) The fourth (flies). (5) The third (lice). (6) The seventh (hail). (7) The eighth (locusts). (8) The tenth (death of firstborn).

28. darkness: the ninth plague (Exod. x. 21 ff.). Here it is named first.

And they rebelled not: render, 'Yet they rebelled,' omitting the negative as LXX, Pesh. Or read with Hitzig, &c., 'And they kept not His words.'

29. We have in this verse an account of the first plague, the turning of the Nile water into blood: see Exod. vii. 14 ff., 21 (J, E).

He turned: the verb used in verse 25 (see); here used transitively.

30. The second plague (frogs), Exod. viii. 1 ff. (J).

Render 30^{b}: '(They went up into) the chambers,' &c. The words in brackets have probably fallen out, and are needed for the rhythm and the sense. See Exod. viii. 3.

He spake, and there came swarms of flies, 31
And lice in all their borders.
He gave them hail for rain, 32
And flaming fire in their land.
He smote their vines also and their fig trees; 33
And brake the trees of their borders.
He spake, and the locust came, 34
And the cankerworm, and that without number,
And did eat up every herb in their land, 35
And did eat up the fruit of their ground.
He smote also all the firstborn in their land, 36
The chief of all their strength.

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31. Two plagues are referred to in this verse, viz. the fourth plague (gadflies: see lxxviii. 45, and Exod. viii. 20 ff. (J)) and the third (lice: see Exod. viii. 16 ff. (P)).

swarms of flies: render: 'the dog fly': see on lxxviii. 45.

lice: render, 'gnats,' or 'stinging flies.' This plague is unmentioned in lxxviii.

32 f. The seventh plague (hail): see lxxviii. 47 f., and Exod. ix. 13 ff., 25 f. (J).

32. rain: Egypt had no rain: it has a little now.

flaming fire: the lightning accompanying the hail storm: see Exod. ix. 24.

34 f. The eighth plague (locusts): see lxxviii. 46; Exod. x. 1 ff. (J).

34. locust: the Hebrew word is that used in lxxviii. 46 and Exod. x. 4, and so translated.

cankerworm: nothing other than the locust is meant. Two words are used here for locust as in lxxviii. 51; in both cases for the sake of the parallelism.

35. did eat up: the same verb occurs twice in Hebrew by mistake. Omitting one consonant (Aleph) we have a word which makes an excellent parallel, 'and did destroy': this verb occurs in lix. 13, cxix. 87, &c.

36. The tenth plague (death of the firstborn): see Exod. lxxviii. 51; Ex. xi. 1 ff.

the chief of all their strength: *lit.* 'the beginning' or 'first-fruit of all their strength': the same Hebrew words are found in Gen. iv. 9; Deut. xxi. 17: see on lxxviii. 51.

37 And he brought them forth with silver and gold:
And there was not one feeble person among his tribes.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed;
For the fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering;
And fire to give light in the night.
40 They asked, and he brought quails,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
41 He opened the rock, and waters gushed out;
They ran in the dry places *like* a river.
42 For he remembered his holy word,

37-45. *Jehovah's goodness at the Exodus, and on the journey to Canaan.*

37. with silver and gold: see Exod. xii. 35.

not one feeble person: better, 'not one that stumbled': based on Isa. v. 27.

among his (Jehovah's) **tribes**: see cxxii. 4.

38. See Exod. xii. 31–33.

the fear of them (the Israelites) **had fallen upon them** (the Egyptians): see Exod. xv. 16; Deut. xi. 25.

39-41. *Miracles of the wilderness journey.*

39. See Exod. xiii. 21 f., xiv. 19 f. In Exodus, however, the cloud is a defence between the Israelites and the Egyptians (see especially Exod. xiv. 19): here it shelters them against the scorching rays of the sun: see Isa. iv. 56.

a covering: the Hebrew word may denote something that is vertical (see Exod. xxvii. 16, xxxv. 12), as well as what occupies a horizontal position (2 Sam xvii. 19). If we can think of a cloud standing upright between the Israelites and the Egyptians the apparent contradiction with Exodus disappears.

40. quails: elsewhere mentioned in Exod. xvi. 13 (P) and Num. xi. 31 (J, E).

bread of heaven: i. e. the manna: so lxxviii. 24 f.; Neh. ix. 15; cf. John v. 31; 1 Cor. x. 3.

41. See lxxviii. 20 (note on); Exod. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11: cf. Isa. xli. 18, xlviii. 21. There is a Jewish tradition that a rock full of fissures, whence issued fresh water, followed the Israelites through the wilderness.

42–45. *The summing up of the whole matter:* verse 42 refers back to verse 8.

And Abraham his servant.
And he brought forth his people with joy, 43
And his chosen with singing.
And he gave them the lands of the nations; 44
And they took the labour of the peoples in possession:
That they might keep his statutes, 45
And observe his laws.
Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD. 106

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42. *And* **Abraham**: render: ('His holy word' = 'covenant') 'With Abraham'; so LXX, Jero., Pesh., Targ. The Hebrew can denote either.

43. with joy (gladness): **with singing** (rather, ringing shouts of joy): reminiscent of Exod. xv, but especially of Isa. xxxv. 10, li. 11, lv. 12, which utter the joy felt at the prospect of deliverance from Babylon.

44. See Deut. vi. 10 f.

labour: the Hebrew word means 'labour itself as such,' and also 'what is gained by labour': here it is the latter that is intended.

45. Praise ye the LORD (Heb. *Hallelujah*): omitted in LXX and Pesh., and rightly: it is inserted from the beginning of the next Psalm by a copyist's error.

PSALM CVI.

Theme. Israel's ingratitude and unfaithfulness notwithstanding Jehovah's lovingkindness.

I. *Title.* See on verse 1.

II. *Contents.* This Psalm is a retrospect of the nation's past with a view to pointing out the sins of the fathers. Ps. cv recalled the past in order to make mention of the lovingkindness of God. The present Psalm agrees with Ps. lxxviii in that both have as their dominant note the sins of Israel in times past. Remembering the idea of national and even of human solidarity which had vogue in the ancient world (see on verse 6) it will be seen that this confession of the sins of their ancestors involved a confession of their own guilt. The arrangement of the Psalm is on the whole according to chronology (but see on 32 f.), and it is difficult to made a logical analysis of the contents. The following sets forth the general course of thought:

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD,
Or shew forth all his praise?
3 Blessed are they that keep judgement,
And he that doeth righteousness at all times.
4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest
unto thy people;

(1) Summons to praise Jehovah: the happiness of those who work righteousness (verses 1–3).

(2) Prayer of the writer for himself (verses 4 f.).

(3) Recital of several sins of which Israel in the wilderness was guilty (verses 6–33).

(4) Sins of which Israel was guilty after reaching Canaan (verses 34–39).

(5) Jehovah's punishment of Israel's sin (verses 40–43).

(6) His remembrance of His covenant and His compassion (verses 44–46).

(7) Prayer for restoration (verse 47).

(8) Closing doxology (editorial) (verse 48).

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cv.

The present Psalm shows dependence on Num. xvi. 35 (P), Job, Isa. xl ff., Ezek. xx, &c., and it has some Aramaisms—a confirmation of the late date inferred on other grounds. But see on verse 17.

1–3. *A call to praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise ye the LORD: Heb. *Hallelujah*; see on 'Hallelujah Psalms,' pp. 226 f., and for 'Jah' ('Yah') see on lxxxix. 8.

This phrase ('Praise ye Yah') is no part of the Psalm itself; see on Ps. cv (*Title*).

The remainder of verse 1 stands also outside the Psalm proper, with which it has no logical connexion. It is a kind of liturgical formula used to introduce Pss. cvi f., cxviii and cxxxvi: it is found also in 1 Chron. xvi. 34 and Jer. xxxiii. 11.

2. See xli. 5.

utter: an Aramaic and late word, suggestive of late date.

his praise: read (with LXX, Pesh., Jero.) 'His praises,' i. e. 'His praiseworthy acts.'

3. Blessed: rather, 'Happy': see on lxxxiv. 4.

judgement: the principle which should regulate the conduct of the judge.

he that doeth: the ancient versions have the plural 'those who do,' &c. This agrees with 3^a.

O visit me with thy salvation:
That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen, 5
That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
That I may glory with thine inheritance.

We have sinned with our fathers, 6
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; 7
They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
But were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

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4 f. In these verses, according to the M. T., Pesh., Jero., and Targ., the plural is suddenly changed to the singular. It is better, however, with the Greek versions to continue the plural as Duhm does. No change in the Hebrew of verse 5 is necessary for this. If the singular is retained we may regard the verses as a reader's prayer written originally in the margin in the manner of Oriental readers. Ewald thought that the singular is due to the fact that one person had to sing these words.

favour and **salvation** are in parallelism also in Isa. xlix. 8.

5. see: i. e. experience, so lxxxix. 12, &c., cf. John iii. 3. Followed by the preposition found here in Hebrew the verb means especially to look upon with delight; so cxii. 8, &c.

6–33. *Recital of the leading acts of sin, of which, in the wilderness, the Israelites were guilty. Seven such are enumerated.*

6. General confession; see 1 Kings viii. 47; Neh. ix; Dan. ix. 5; Baruch ii.

We have sinned with our fathers: the conception of the solidarity of nations was very great in ancient times. The individual was hardly thought of as such, but only as a part of a larger whole. The so-called federal theology is based on this idea. In a similar way Levi is said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek: i. e. in Abraham. See on cix. 9–15.

We have committed iniquity: the Heb. = 'we have exhibited a perverse character,' 'acted in a crooked way.'

7. Mention of the first sin. Murmuring at the Red Sea.

understood not: gave no heed to; see Deut. xxxii. 28 ff.

multitude of thy mercies: render: 'the abundance of thy lovingkindness': the latter noun is singular in LXX, Aq., Jero., Targ., though in Pesh. it is plural as in the M.T.

But were rebellious, &c.: read, 'And they defied the Most High at the Sea of Suph'; see lxxviii. 56. Very few changes are needed to yield this sense. The M.T. bears on its face the

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake,
That he might make his mighty power to be known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up:
So he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness.
10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 And the waters covered their adversaries:
There was not one of them left.
12 Then believed they his words;
They sang his praise.
13 They soon forgat his works;
They waited not for his counsel:
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,

---

appearance of corruption. Venema, and most moderns, read as above.

Red Sea: Heb. 'Sea of Reeds': better retain the proper name form of the words 'Yam Suph.' The Red Sea has no reeds growing in it, but only in its neighbourhood. Many therefore locate the Biblical 'Yam Suph' in the low-lying marshy ground, north of the modern Suez. In that case the Red Sea of the LXX, though adopted in the N.T. (Acts vii. 36, &c.), is an inaccurate rendering of the Hebrew. It should be remembered that the Heb. *yam*, the Arabic *bahr*, and the Greek *thalassa* mean not only what we understand by sea, but also a smaller collection of waters, a river (the Nile, &c.), a lake (Dead Sea, &c.), &c.

8. for his name's sake: see Exod. xiv. 19; Ezek. xx. 9.

9. He rebuked: see on civ. 7, and cf. Isa. l. 2.

wilderness: better, 'wild pasture land.'

9[b] is from Isa. lxiii. 13.

10. redeemed: *ga'al*; see on lxxix. 2.

11. See Exod. xiv. 28, xv. 5.

12. See Exod. xiv. 31, xv. 1.

13–15. *The second example of Israel's sin. The lust for flesh* (see Num. xi).

13. soon forgat: Heb. 'quickly forgat.'

his counsel: i. e. 'His plan,' or 'purpose.'

14. lusted exceedingly: Heb. 'desired with desire' (accus.); see Luke xxii. 15.

And tempted God in the desert.
And he gave them their request; 15
But sent leanness into their soul.
They envied Moses also in the camp, 16
And Aaron the saint of the LORD.
The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, 17
And covered the company of Abiram.
And a fire was kindled in their company; 18
The flame burned up the wicked.
They made a calf in Horeb, 19

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tempted: 'put to the proof,' 'tested,' because lacking faith in God: not 'tempt' in the modern sense; see lxxviii. 29 f.; Num. xi. 4.

desert: the Hebrew word is almost a proper name for the desert of the wandering, and perhaps for some parts of it, though it comes probably from a root meaning 'to be desolate.' In the Pesh. the word is untranslated: 'Ashimōn' (strictly Ăshsh-) for Heb. *yeshimōn*.

15. leanness: read (with LXX, Pesh., &c.), 'loathing.' They had the food they longed for, but their longing turned to loathing.

their soul: i. e. 'themselves'; see on lxxviii. 18, cvii. 18: 'But sent them' (lit. 'into them') 'loathing.'

16-18. *The third example of their sin.* Under the lead of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram they revolted against Moses and Aaron, i. e. against God; see Num. xvi.

16. the saint of the LORD: render, 'the holy one of Jehovah.'

17. Dathan and **Abiram** are mentioned without Korah as in the older tradition (J, E: see Deut. xi. 6). In a later tradition (P) the name of Korah is added. See G. Buchanan Gray on Num. xvi. 24, 27 and xxvi. 10. The Psalmist follows the older tradition.

18. The reference is to Num. xvi. 35 (P), where it is said that a fire came forth from Jehovah and devoured the two hundred and fifty followers of Korah who offered incense.

19-23. *The fourth example of Israel's sinning in the wilderness: worship of the golden calf* (see Exod. xxxii (E), Deut. ix. 8).

Calf (rather steer) worship was probably taken over from the Canaanites, and not from the Egyptians, since it was a live bull (Apis) that the latter worshipped.

19. calf: render, 'steer,' i. e. a bull calf.

Horeb: the name found in E and D for Sinai (J and P).

And worshipped a molten image.
20 Thus they changed their glory
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
21 They forgat God their saviour,
Which had done great things in Egypt;
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
And terrible things by the Red Sea.
23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.
24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land,
They believed not his word;
25 But murmured in their tents,
And hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

---

20. changed: Heb. can mean 'exchanged.'

their glory: if this text is kept, it = 'what they gloried in,' i. e. 'their God': see Deut. iv. 6-8, x. 21. The original reading was 'His (God's) glory'; see Rom. i. 23. So Theod. and some MSS. of the LXX. Rabbinical authority regards this as one of the 'eighteen corrections of the scribes,' holding that 'my glory' stood in the original text. See Ginsburg, *Introd. to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 360.

21 f. They forgot their benefactor.

22. land of Ham: in connexion with Egypt; see on cv. 23, cf. lxxviii. 57.

23. See Exod. xxxii. 10 ff.; Num. xiv. 11 ff.

that he would destroy them: from Deut. ix. 25.

stood . . . in the breach: the figure is that of a breach made in a city wall by an invader: to prevent the enemy from entering, a hero steps into the breach. Moses stood between Israel and Jehovah, averting the anger of the latter from the former; see Jer. xviii. 20; Ezek. xxii. 30.

24–27. *The fifth example of sin.* In consequence of the unfavourable report of the spies they despised the land promised them. See Num. xiii f.

24. the pleasant land: the same expression is found in Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14.

25. murmured, &c. from Deut. i. 27.

Therefore he lifted up his hand unto them,
That he would overthrow them in the wilderness:
And that he would overthrow their seed among the nations, 27
And scatter them in the lands.
They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, 28
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
Thus they provoked him to anger with their doings; 29
And the plague brake in upon them.
Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgement: 30
And so the plague was stayed.

---

26. lifted up his hand: 'He swore.' The same idiom exists in other Semitic languages (Arabic, &c.). When an oath was made the right hand was raised towards God as if calling Him to witness: see Num. xiv. 28 f., 32. Here and in Exod. vi. 8, &c. the same expression is used anthropomorphically of God Himself.

27. Render: 'And that He would scatter their seed' (descendants) 'among the nations' (heathen), 'And disperse them in the land.'

overthrow: read (with LXX), 'disperse,' changing the final consonant of the Hebrew.

28–31. *A sixth sin mentioned: uniting in the worship of the Moabites* (see Num. xxv).

28. They joined themselves: LXX 'They were initiated,' Jero. '*Consecrati sunt*'; both referring perhaps to certain mysteries or orgies connected with such worship as is implied.

Baal-peor: rather, 'Baal of Peor' = the Baal worshipped at Peor (Num. xxiii. 28), i. e. probably on mount Pisgah. This deity has by some been identified with the Moabite tutelar deity Chemosh; by others it has been supposed to have been a Moabite Priapus, having a worship with grossly immoral rites; see Driver on Deut. iv. 3.

dead: i. e. heathen gods, in contrast with the living God of Israel: see cxv. 5 ff., &c., and cf. xlii. 2.

By taking part in the sacrificial meals of the Moabites they were eating with their gods.

29. provoked him to anger: see Deut. iv. 25, &c.

plague: the Hebrew word generally means 'a pestilence' or 'disease inflicted by God.' The same word occurs in Num. xxv. 9.

30. See Num. xxv. 7 f.

Phinehas: son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron.

executed judgement: better, 'mediated' (Jero.).

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness,
Unto all generations for evermore.
32 They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:
33 Because they were rebellious against his spirit,
And he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
34 They did not destroy the peoples,
As the LORD commanded them;
35 But mingled themselves with the nations,
And learned their works:
36 And they served their idols;

31. counted unto him for righteousness: the phrase occurs in the Pentateuch of Abraham only: see Gen. xv. 6 (J).

As a reward for this act of faith Phinehas received for himself and his family the priestly office: see Num. xxv. 12 f.

32 f. *The seventh example of sin committed in the wilderness: the murmuring against Moses and Aaron at Meribah* (see Num. xx. 1-13). This incident occurred before that of verses 28-31, but it is placed last as involving the most serious of all the sins enumerated, Moses himself being concerned in it.

32. They angered him: a common expression in Deuteronomy. See Deut. viii. 22, ix. 7, &c.

Meribah: see on lxxviii. 15, lxxxi. 7, and xcv. 8.

it went ill with Moses, &c.: i. e. Moses was excluded from Canaan on account of this unbelief of the people. Two other reasons are given in the O. T. for the exclusion of Moses and Aaron from the promised land. See Num. xx. 1-13 (J. E) and Deut. i. 3, ii. 36, iv. 21.

33. they were rebellious: i.e. the Israelites: see 32[a] and lxxviii. 40.

against his spirit: i. e. God's spirit, not Moses': see lxxviii. 40; Isa. lxiii. 10. The verb used (= defied) has God for object always.

spake unadvisedly: the same Hebrew verb in Lev. v. 4 (twice).

34-39. *Sins committed by Israel after reaching the Promised Land.* Two are spoken of: (1) they refused to exterminate the natives, though commanded to do so: 34 f. (see Exod. xxiii. 32 f., &c.); (2) they adopted some of the abominable rites of the Canaanites: 36-39.

Bickell and Duhm reject verse 34 as an interpolation.

36. See Exod. xxiii. 33; Judges ii. 3. 11-15; cf. Exod. xxxiv. 12; Deut. vii. 15.

Which became a snare unto them:
Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto 37
demons,
And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons 38
and of their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.
Thus were they defiled with their works, 39
And went a whoring in their doings.

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37. demons: Heb. *Shedim*, a word which in the M. T. occurs only here and in Deut. xxxii. 17. It is probably derived from the Assyrian *shêdu*, the name of a storm-god represented by the bull Collossi often found in front of Assyrian temples. The Divine name *Shaddai* goes back apparently to the same Assyrian word. On these *shedim* see Driver on Deut. xxxii. 17, and cf. the new (third) edition (untranslated) of Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, pp. 360 f. These Israelites sacrificed their children to Babylonian deities. Neither **demons** (LXX, Vulg., Jero.) nor 'evil spirits' (Targ.) correctly represents the Hebrew. As to the practice of human sacrifice among the Assyrians see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 78.

38. The Israelites learned from the Canaanites to offer human sacrifices; see Gen. xxii; Exod. xxii. 28, &c. Such sacrifices prevailed among the Moabites: 2 Kings iii. 27.

In some passages we have the phrase: 'They caused their sons to pass through the fire'; see Deut. xviii. 10, &c. In others the language is: 'They burned their sons in the fire'; see Jer. vii. 31, &c. But the former phrase (found in about seven places) should be altered: by transposing two of the letters of the word (*b* and *'ain*) we get 'They burnt' instead of 'They caused to pass.' This suits all the examples well. The old rendering gave rise to the notion, once generally held, that children were sacrificed to Moloch, the god of the Amorites, by being made to pass through a burning furnace.

the land was polluted: by the sins of the people: according to the ancient opinion as to the connexion between inhabitants and land, see Lev. xviii. 24 ff., &c.

39. (Thus) were they defiled: LXX 'was it (the land) defiled.'

went a whoring: Jehovah is Israel's husband (see Hos. ii. 2 f.), so that infidelity to Him is compared to a wife's infidelity to her husband. See Exod. xxxiv. 15 f. &c.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people,
And he abhorred his inheritance.
41 And he gave them into the hand of the nations;
And they that hated them ruled over them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
43 Many times did he deliver them;
But they were rebellious in their counsel,
And were brought low in their iniquity.
44 Nevertheless he regarded their distress,
When he heard their cry:
45 And he remembered for them his covenant,
And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.
46 He made them also to be pitied

40-43. *Israel's sin punished.*

40. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people: these words recur in Judges frequently and in a similar connexion: see Judges ii. 14, 20, &c.

41. nations: i. e. 'the heathen.'

42. oppressed: see Judges iv. 3, x. 8; 1 Sam. ix. 16.

they were brought into subjection: for what this meant see Judges iv. 6-11; 1 Sam. xiii. 19 f.

43. Many times did he deliver them: by Othniel (Judges iii. 9), by Ehud (Judges iii. 15-29), by Shamgar (Judges iii. 31), by Deborah and Barak (Judges iv. 4-24), by Gideon (Judges vii. 19-25), by Jephthah (Judges xi. 12-33), by Samson (Judges xviii. 8-20), by David (2 Sam. v. 22-25), and by others.

were brought low: read (with a slight change), 'pined,' as in Lev. xxvi. 39, &c.

44-46. *Jehovah's remembrance of His covenant.*

44. their cry: 'their loud ringing cry': generally a cry of great joy; here of anguish.

45. he remembered . . . his covenant: see Lev. xxvi. 41 f.

repented: rather, 'and had compassion': see on xc. 13.

mercies: better, 'lovingkindnesses': better still the sing. with *keth.*, LXX, Jero. The Massorites (*qr.*) prefer the plural.

46. Render: 'He made them to be objects of pity,' &c.: see 1 Kings viii. 50.

Of all those that carried them captives.

Save us, O LORD our God, 47
And gather us from among the nations,
To give thanks unto thy holy name,
And to triumph in thy praise.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, 48
From everlasting even to everlasting.
And let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye the LORD.

BOOK V.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: 107
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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47 = 1 Chron. xvi. 35.

gather us: not from Babylon; cf. 'nations' (= 'the heathen'). It is the Diaspora of a later time that seems implied.

to triumph: rather = 'to make our boast.' The verb is Aramaic, and argues a late date.

48. An editorial appendix to close Book IV. Cf. the closing doxologies of Books I, II, and III.

Praise ye the LORD: i. e. Hallelujah: belongs to the next Psalm (*title*); so LXX. The word **Amen**, following a doxology, closes Books I, II, and III, and the same is doubtlessly true in the present case.

BOOK V.

This Book embraces Pss. cvii-cl. For introductory remarks see Introduction to Books IV and V, pp. 127 f.

PSALM CVII.

Theme. A call to praise Jehovah for His gracious acts.

I. *Title.* Hallelujah: see on cvi. 48.

II. *Contents.* Though Pss. cv f. belong to a different book they stand in close connexion with this Psalm, forming with it a series having a similar date and perhaps the same author: see Introd. to Ps. cv. These Psalms, though prompted, it may be, by some great act of deliverance, celebrate God's general goodness

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,

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to His people. Verses 23–32 show that the return from Exile is not the only blessing which this Psalm recalls.

The refrain, 'Let them give thanks to Jehovah,' &c., occurs in verses 8, 15, 21, 31, but it does not mark the logical divisions of the first part of the Psalm. Yet after it in each case one more verse completes the strophe, which seems to show that its present position was intended. This arrangement was probably due to liturgical requirements. There is no Psalm nor any portion of a Psalm more symmetrically arranged than verses 1–32.

(1) Introduction. General summons to praise Jehovah for His many deliverances (verses 1–3).

(2) Detailed enumeration of Jehovah's acts of deliverance (verses 4–32).

This enumeration is set forth in four strophes, each dealing with a different class of people helped in time of need. (1) The condition of those requiring aid is described; (2) these are represented as crying to God for help, and as receiving favourable answers; (3) they are then summoned to give thanks to their Divine Deliverer.

The four classes enumerated are as follows:

(1) Travellers who have lost their way in wilderness and desert (verses 4–9).

(2) Men imprisoned in dark dungeons because they defied Jehovah (verses 10–16).

(3) Men sorely afflicted by God on account of their sins (verses 17–22).

(4) Travellers on the sea in a furious and perilous storm (verses 23–32).

Verses 33–43 is an anthology made up of extracts taken from Job, Isa. xl ff., &c. Its rhythm or metre differs much from that of verses 1–32 as well as its subject-matter, though 36^b may have some affinity with the first part of the Psalm. Duhm and Cheyne[2] are probably right in seeing in these verses a late addition.

This part may be thus analysed:

(1) Jehovah punishes the wicked by making their land barren (verses 33 f.).

(2) Jehovah rewards the righteous by making their land fruitful and themselves more numerous (verses 35–38).

(3) He defends His people, but confounds His foes (verses 39–42).

(4) An exhortation to ponder upon these things (verse 43).

III. *Authorship and Date.* Most recent writers agree that the Psalm is post-exilic. Verses 1–3 speak of redeemed ones gathered from every quarter of the globe, showing that the writer has in

Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary;
And gathered them out of the lands, 3
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way; 4
They found no city of habitation.
Hungry and thirsty, 5
Their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, 6

---

mind many manifestations of the Divine power and love, though that from Babylon may have been the deliverance which prompted the Psalm, or at least verses 1–32; verses 33–43 seem to belong to a later date.

1–3. *Summons to give thanks to Jehovah.*

1. With this verse cf. cvi. 1, cxviii. 1, cxxxvi. 1.

2. redeemed: from the verb *ga'al*: see on lxxiv. 2.

redeemed of the LORD: from Isa. lxii. 12.

adversary: the Hebrew word can, and here does, mean 'distress': **hand** denotes here 'power.'

3. And gathered them: see cvi. 47; Jer. xxxii. 37, &c.

south: here again the E.VV. correct the M.T., reading *yamin* (south, *lit.* 'right hand') for *yam* ('west,' *lit.* sea, i. e. (usually) the Mediterranean). If, following the ancient versions, we retain *yam* (=sea), the reference must be to the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean, for it is the southern quarter that is meant; see ii. 8, lxxii. 8.

4–32. *Instances of Jehovah's acts of deliverance.*

4–9. *Travellers who have missed their way.*

4. wandered: Heb. 'lost their way.' The subject, not expressed, must be understood in an indefinite way according to a common Hebrew usage. **They wandered** = 'There were some who wandered.'

wilderness: the Hebrew word = 'wild pasture land on which cattle, &c. graze.'

desert way: render, 'in a desert of a way,' cf. Prov. xv. 19, 'fool of a man.' For the word **desert** see on cvi. 14. 'A desert of a way' = 'a way that is desert like,' i. e. rough, pathless, &c. LXX 'in a waterless desert.' For other interpretations see the Versions and the larger Commentaries.

5. Their soul = 'they themselves' according to Hebrew idiom.

fainted: Heb. 'continued in a faint condition.'

6. trouble: the radical idea in this word, and in that of verse 2

And he delivered them out of their distresses.
7 He led them also by a straight way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
9 For he satisfieth the longing soul,
And the hungry soul he filleth with good.

10 Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being bound in affliction and iron;
11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And contemned the counsel of the Most High:
12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour;
They fell down, and there was none to help.
13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he saved them out of their distresses.
14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,

---

properly rendered above 'distress,' is 'straitness': 'confinement in a narrow place.' The common greeting in Palestine is *Marhaba*, i. e. may you have enlargement. The principal Hebrew word for 'salvation' means 'enlargement,' and the name 'Jesus' means strictly 'the Enlarger,' or 'He who sets at large.' The same figures for distress and its opposite occur in most languages, including Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit.

he delivered: the same continuous or frequentative tense.

8. Render: 'Let them' (those guided, &c.) 'praise,' &c. The R. V. gives the word too general an application.

children of men: Semitic idiom for 'men': see on lxxix. 11.

10–16. *Prisoners in dark regions.*

10. Such as sat in darkness: so in Isa. xlii. 7 of the exiles: cf. Isa. ix. 2; Mic. vii. 8; Jer. xvi. 16, xxxvi. 8.

shadow of death: see xxiii. 4 and on lxxxviii. 6.

Being bound in affliction and iron: render, 'being prisoners afflicted and in fetters': see Job xxxvi. 8.

11. rebelled against: 'defied.' The Hebrew word is a great one in Deuteronomy: see Deut. i. 26, 43, ix. 23, &c.

12. he brought down: read, with LXX and Duhm, 'their heart was bowed down.' No change in the consonants is needed.

14. shadow of death: see on lxxxviii. 6.

And brake their bands in sunder.
Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, 15
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath broken the gates of brass, 16
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Fools because of their transgression, 17
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; 18
And they draw near unto the gates of death.
Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, 19
And he saveth them out of their distresses.
He sendeth his word, and healeth them, 20
And delivereth *them* from their destructions.
Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, 21

---

bands explains 'iron' in verse 10. The same noun and also the verb connected with it here occur in ii. 3. The verb is used in Judges xvi. 12 of Samson's snapping the cords.

15. See on verse 8.

16. The words are from Isa. xlv. 2, and must therefore be of later date.

17-22. *Men sorely afflicted on account of their sins.*

17. Fools: i. e. wicked men.

their transgression: Heb. 'their rebellious conduct' (not as R.Vm.); see verse 11.

are afflicted: the Hebrew = 'afflict themselves': they bring suffering upon themselves by their disobedience. The tense denotes what is continuous.

18. Their soul: by a Hebrew idiom = 'they themselves'; see on lxxviii. 18; but 'soul' denotes also the organ of desire, appetite; so verse 9, xlii. 3, &c.

This verse rests on Job xxxiii. 20. What it says is that their sufferings take away their appetite and, at length, bring them to the verge of death.

20. word: i. e. command.

And delivereth . . . destructions: read, with Kahan, 'And delivers them' (*lit.* 'their life') 'from the pit' (=the grave). The change is obtained almost wholly by a rearrangement of the same Hebrew letters.

21. See on verse 8.

And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
22 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with singing.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
24 These see the works of the LORD,
And his wonders in the deep.
25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths:
Their soul melteth away because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,

---

22. sacrifices of thanksgiving as in cxvi. 17; see Hos. xiv. 2 ('calves of our lips') and Heb. xiii. 15.

23–32. *Sea merchants—the fourth and last class.*

23. Render: 'They that descend into the sea in ships, That traffic over great waters'; Hebrews spoke of going **down**, Greeks of going *up* into a ship.

do business: i. e. as merchants, not as fishermen.

great waters: see Isa. xxiii. 3; Ezek. xxvii. 25.

24. works . . . wonders: not the doings and outstanding acts of God in nature, storms and the like, but His deliverances during storms.

25. and raiseth: better construe the verb as intrans. (*Qal*) and not trans. (*Hiph*), though the Hebrew consonantal text can be either: render, 'And a stormy wind arose, which,' &c.

26 f. contain a description of sea sickness.

26. They: i. e. the sea merchants, not the waves.

Their soul: i. e. they themselves; see on verse 18. Kirkpatrick quotes a similar passage from Vergil, *Aeneid*, iii. 564:

'We are lifted heavenwards on the circling whirlpool, and so,
When the wave is withdrawn we descend to the lowest shades.'

their soul melteth: i. e. they lose heart, courage.

27. Most commentators from Rosenmüller to Kirkpatrick quote a parallel description from Ovid, *Tristitia*, i. 2. 12 ff.

And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, 28
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm, 29
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet; 30
So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.
Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, 31
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people, 32
And praise him in the seat of the elders.

And are at their wits' end: a charming setting of the Hebrew, 'and their skill is baffled' (*lit.* swallowed up).

28=6, 13, 19. The distress, the prayer, the deliverance follow just in that order in all the four pictures: cf. the Basque proverb quoted by Kay: 'Let him who knows not how to pray go to sea.'

29. He maketh, &c.: *lit.* 'He causes a storm to rise into silence,' a pregnant construction meaning, 'When He has raised a storm He causes it to die in silence.'

30. because they be quiet: i. e. the waves; see Jonah i. 11.

haven: render, 'city': the Hebrew word occurs only here: in Assyrian it means city.

33–43. This section of the Psalm differs from the rest in subject-matter, rhythm or metre, and in the fact that the refrain of verses 8, 15, 31 is lacking. Much of this part is borrowed, especially from Isa. xl ff. and Job. Probably it is an addition made for liturgical purposes. The situation reflected in verses 1–32 is not suggested by verses 33 f.

33 f. Jehovah dries up streams and springs, and makes fruitful land barren on account of the people's sin.

Sudden changes of the kind described in these verses are common enough in the East. In verses 35 f. changes of a contrary nature are pictured: promises involving these last are given in Isa. xl ff. to the Babylonian exiles in order to encourage them to return. Note how, as so often in Oriental literature, the movements of nature are referred directly to spiritual agency, here to Jehovah. Note also how sin is made the cause of disasters of a material sort

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And watersprings into a thirsty ground;
34 A fruitful land into a salt desert,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
35 He turneth a wilderness into a pool of water,
And a dry land into watersprings.
36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
That they may prepare a city of habitation;
37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,
And get them fruits of increase.
38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;
And he suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

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33. rivers and **watersprings** stand for the land watered by them.

wilderness: untilled and untillable pasture land; *lit.* 'a place where animals feed.'

33[a] was suggested by Isa. l. 2[b], and 33[b] by Isa. xxxvii. 7[a].

34. salt desert: Heb. a 'place that is salty': such a place is of necessity the opposite of a **fruitful land.** The same word occurs in Job xxxix. 6 (of the home of the wild ass), and in Jer. xvii. 6. Perhaps the writer has in mind the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrha; see Deut. xxix. 23.

35 f. The reverse picture to that of verses 33 f.

35 based on Isa. xli. 18: cf. Isa. xxxv. 7, xliii. 20. When the Algerian Arabs have sunk an artesian well they shout out 'Allah' (=God) 'is great, and He gives everything that is good.' So here the lake and the running streams are traced immediately to Divine agency.

37 f. continue the thought of 35 f., Jehovah rewards the righteous.

37. With 37[a] cf. Jer. xxix. 5.

And get them fruits of increase: Heb. idiom compels us to translate thus: 'which (the **fields** and **vineyards**) yield fruit' (of increase). The Hebrew for **of increase** is simply a marginal gloss explaining fruit: **fruit of increase** is an unknown phrase. The Hebrew for 'to yield fruit' is used invariably of fields, trees, and the like, but never of human agency.

38. He blesseth them: i. e. the fields and vineyards.

Again, they are minished and bowed down 39
Through oppression, trouble, and sorrow.
He poureth contempt upon princes, 40
And causeth them to wander in the waste, where there is no way.
Yet setteth he the needy on high from affliction, 41
And maketh *him* families like a flock.
The upright shall see it, and be glad; 42
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
Whoso is wise shall give heed to these things, 43
And they shall consider the mercies of the LORD.

A Song, a Psalm of David. 108
My heart is fixed, O God; 1

39–42. *Jehovah protects His people, but confounds their foes.*

39. This verse forms the protasis to verse 41; verse 40 having been inserted from the margin, where a transcriber put it to show how Jehovah treats men of power who use their power to oppress His people. Translate verses 39 and 41 thus

(39) 'And when they are made few and brought low,
Through oppression, adversity, and sorrow,
(41) He puts the needy on a height (safe) from affliction,
And makes (for him) families like a flock.'

39. Again: not in the Hebrew, nor required by the sense.

minished: an old English word now superseded by the compound 'diminish.'

40. An interpolation taken *verbatim* from Job xii. 21[a] and xxiv. 6 where the words are suitable, as they are not here.

41. like a flock: so numerous; see Job xxi. 11; Ezek. xxxvi. 37 f.; Zech. ix. 16.

42. 42[a] from Job xxii. 19; 42[b] from Job v. 16.
The verbs should be translated as presents, not futures.

43. Render:

'Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things,
And let him (M. T. 'them') consider the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah.'

Cf. the end of Hos. xiv. 10, which is similar, and which closes the book as the words here close the Psalm; see Jer. ix. 11.

PSALM CVIII.

This Psalm is made up of two parts, each borrowed from older Psalms: verses 1–5 = lvii. 7–11; verses 6–13 = lx. 5–12.

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises, even with my glory.
2 Awake, psaltery and harp:
I myself will awake right early.
3 I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the peoples:

It is quite evident that the two parts are original in Pss. lvii and lx, as is shown by many considerations, such as that this Psalm is Elohistic, though the collection is Yahwistic; that the order of thought in this Psalm (thanksgiving, prayer) is the reverse of the usual one; and moreover this supposition best explains the deviations in the text.

Theme. Praise and thanksgiving followed by a prayer for help against enemies.

I. *Contents.* (1) Praise and thanksgiving (verses 1–5, taken from lvii. 7–11).

(2) Prayer for help against Israel's foes, based on God's promise to give the land of Canaan to His people, and to defend them from their enemies (verses 6–13, taken from lx. 5–12).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See vol. i, introductions to Pss. lvii and lx. The present composite Psalm is of course of later date than its component Psalms. All three Psalms are post-exilic.

1–5. *Praise and thanksgiving* = lvii. 7–11 (see notes on).

1. fixed: rather, 'prepared.' Different forms of the cognate verb occur in Gen. xliii. 16, 25; Exod. xxxiv. 2; 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, &c. 'My heart is in a prepared state: so I will sing.'

even with my glory: render, 'even I myself': a second subject to 'I will sing.' 'Glory' = 'soul' as in vii. 5, xvi. 9, xxx. 12, because the soul is the glory of the man: cf. xxx. 12, lvii. 8, and Gen. xlix. 6.

2. I myself will awake right early: render: 'I will awake at the dawn.' Delitzsch and others translate as in R.Vm. 'I will awake the dawn,' which the Hebrew equally allows; 'I will anticipate the dawn, rise before it to give thanks to Jehovah.'

For I **will awake** one is tempted to read 'I will sing,' changing one letter only for another resembling it closely; 'I will sing in the early morning.'

3. LORD: i. e. Jehovah: in the corresponding verse lvii. 9 *Adonai* (= Lord) is found, the word which the Jews read centuries before Christ and read still for *Yahweh*, and the vowels of which are attached to the consonants of *Yahweh* to make 'Jehovah' (Yehovah). This last is really no name at all, any more than 'Jahes' (consonants of 'John' and vowels of 'James'). The versions, ancient and modern, translate *Adonai* the substitute of *Yahweh* instead of transliterating the latter. When, however, 'Lord' represents *Yahweh* it has in the E.VV. large capitals, LORD. In

And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.
For thy mercy is great above the heavens, 4
And thy truth *reacheth* unto the skies.
Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: 5
And thy glory above all the earth.
That thy beloved may be delivered, 6
Save with thy right hand, and answer us.
God hath spoken in his holiness; I will exult: 7

---

some French versions 'L'Éternel' is used, so that the distinction is kept up. If in Hebrew '*Yahweh* Lord' come together 'GOD' takes the place of LORD as a substitute for *Yahweh*, to prevent the repetition of the same word (LORD Lord): the Hebrew consonants of *Yahweh* are then supplied with the vowels of *Elohim* (God): see cix. 21 and on cxl. 7, and cf. vol. i. 358 f.

among the nations: therefore the writer is among foreigners in a foreign country. It is not, however, the Hebrew word, 'the heathen' (*goim*), that occurs here, though the two words used do naturally denote foreign nations.

4. mercy: rather, 'lovingkindness.'

great above: we must change the preposition, making it = (reaching) 'unto' as in the next clause, and as in the parallel part of lvii. 10. **Great above** followed by **unto** ('up to') would be an anticlimax.

heavens: 'great unto the heavens' = great as can be conceived.

truth: better, 'faithfulness.'

5. thy glory = 'thou thyself': see on verse 1. An interesting example of anthropomorphism. God's glory = God's soul (as if He had one) = God Himself. Here 'thy glory' is parallel to **thou.**

above all the earth: this introduces an anticlimax into the verse, and a very awkward one. We are evidently to translate 5^b thus: 'Let thy glory' (= thou thyself) 'be (more extended) than the earth.' The words in brackets are implied in the Hebrew: the verb 'to be' has often to be supplied. We thus avoid the anticlimax of the R. V.

6–13 = lx. 5–12 (see notes on).

Prayer for help against Israel's foes. The language of these verses suggests a situation of national danger, though no specific period can be inferred. The prayer is based on some promise or oracle given by Jehovah: see verses 6 f.

6. beloved: used like 'favoured ones' for the faithful in Israel.

(**answer**) **us:** read 'me' with the versions.

In verses 7-9 we have the contents of the oracle on which the prayer is based. We do not know when or under what circum-

I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim also is the defence of mine head;
Judah is my sceptre.
9 Moab is my washpot;

---

stances this oracle was uttered. We seem to have here only a poetical rendering of 2 Sam. vii. 8 f. with an adaptation to suit the time. 2 Sam. vii is post-exilic (see Introd. to Ps. lxxxix), and so for certain is the oracle in verses 7-9 of the present Psalm, though it is doubtful whether John Hyrcanus (d. B. C. 105) is the only Jewish ruler to whose reign the words can apply (Duhm).

7. spoken: = 'sworn' as in lxxxix. 35.

in his holiness: better, 'by His holiness.' Jehovah's holiness is the pledge of His faithfulness.

I will exult: read, 'I will be strong,' i. e. victorious.

divide: i. e. portion out.

Shechem: west of the Jordan, representing the west Jordan district.

Succoth: the valley of Succoth lay at the mouth of the Jabboq, where the latter enters the Jordan. 'Succoth' stands here therefore for the territory east of the Jordan: see Gen. xxxiii. 17.

8. These words were written at a time when the districts named were in the hands of foes: this, however, would suit almost any period after the fall of the northern kingdom in B. C. 722.

Gilead and (north) **Manasseh** are intended to include the north-east Jordan country, as **Ephraim** and **Judah** stand for the country west of Jordan. But Shechem has been already mentioned: perhaps Ephraim occurs here for the sake of the parallelism. **Shechem** appears in verse 7 as = the west Jordanic territory, i. e. Ephraim and Judah.

the defence of mine head: i. e. my helmet: as Judah is to be the sceptre, Ephraim, as the most powerful tribe, will be the principal defence: this tribe would and did give the principal military leaders.

my sceptre: i. e. the royal power is to be exercised by the tribe of Judah. Gen. xlix. 10 (note the parallelism) shows that 'sceptre' or ruler's staff is what the word means, though the Hebrew word = 'a lawgiver,' 'one that enacts laws.' See Driver on Gen. xlix. 10.

9 f. Moab, Edom and Philistia, the long-time foes of Israel, will receive the punishment they deserve.

9. Moab will be used as a wash basin, in which the Jewish hero will wash away the dust of his feet.

Upon Edom will I cast my shoe:
Over Philistia will I shout.
Who will bring me into the fenced city? 10
Who hath led me unto Edom?
Hast not thou cast us off, O God? 11
And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.
Give us help against the adversary: 12
For vain is the help of man.
Through God we shall do valiantly: 13
For he it is that shall tread down our adversaries.

Edom will be used as a rubbish heap, the ash-heap in front of the Oriental house. The Jewish hero will treat Moab as a wash basin, Edom as a heap of refuse. Driver thinks there is a reference to the not clearly established custom of throwing a shoe upon a piece of land in order to claim possession of it. Parallelism favours the interpretation given above.

shout: better, 'shout in triumph'; see xli. 12. The text here is correct: that in lx. 8 has been corrupted into 'shout thou.'

10 f. Prayer that God may give the promised victory.

10. The question implies a wish, in accordance with Hebrew idiom; though Heb. 'who will give' is most common in this sense.

'Would that some one would bring me,' &c. The indefinite form of the wish arises from the fact that the writer is full of the thing wished for: the *goal*—not the *means*. But the context shows that God was regarded as the only one who could grant the realization of the wish.

fenced city: some definite city seems intended, though it remains unnamed. It is better to restore 'city' before Edom; its omission being due to the double occurrence in the same verse of the same word. Then 'the defenced city' would be parallel to the 'city of Edom,' though we have no means of ascertaining what city the latter was. There could be no wish to be guided to Edom, for Judah joined on to Edom.

The Psalmist in this verse expresses the wish to be able to enter the Edomite city which the Jewish army was storming.

11. Render: 'Hast thou not, O God, cast us off, So that thou goest not forth with our hosts?'

12. against the adversary: better, 'in (*min*, see on cxviii. 5) distress.'

13. Through God = with His help; see lvi. 4.

do valiantly: see cxviii. 15 f.; Num. xxiv. 18.

109 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;

2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of deceit
have they opened against me:

Imprecatory or Vindictive Psalms.

Ps. cix is one of the fiercest of the above Psalms: others are lviii f., lxix, lxxxiii, and cxxxvii.

The maledictions in these Psalms represent the spirit of the age, and are very different from Christ's teaching in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' It should be borne in mind that they refer to this life only, and that the evil they pray for is never moral (lxix. 27 properly interpreted is no exception).

The word of blessing or curse was supposed by its being uttered to bring about its realization. See *Enc. Bibl.* art. 'Magic' (by the present writer), col. 2896; also art. 'Blessings and Cursings,' cols. 591 f. and on cxxxii. 15.

PSALM CIX.

Theme. Prayer for vengeance upon foes (or a foe).

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for protection against foes (or a foe) (verses 1–5).

(2) Prayer for vengeance upon one principal foe (verses 6–20).

(3) The author prays that Jehovah may pity and deliver him (verses 21–31).

II. *Authorship and Date.* There are in the Hebrew linguistic features which show that the Psalm is decidedly post-exilic. Moreover, the present Psalm is dependent on Pss. xxii, xxxv, xxxviii, lv, and lxix f., which confirm the evidence of late date supplied by the style. The extravagant character of the imprecations points to the same conclusion: see Psalms of Solomon iv (date about B. C. 180).

1–5. In these verses the Psalmist prays for help against deceitful and malicious foes. It is implied in verses 6–20, and perhaps in the M.T. of verse 2 (**the mouth of the wicked** [man]), that the Psalmist is thinking of but one foe. Duhm therefore alters the text in verses 1–5 wherever a plurality of enemies is involved, thus making the whole Psalm refer to one particular foe. The Psalm is then much more simple and consistent. The contrary view, that taken for granted in the English versions, requires a change in the text of verse 2, though that change should probably be made in any case.

1. God of my praise: i. e. God who is the object of my praise.

2. mouth of the wicked: Heb. 'the mouth of a wicked man':

They have spoken unto me with a lying tongue.
They compassed me about also with words of hatred, 3
And fought against me without a cause.
For my love they are my adversaries: 4
But I *give myself unto* prayer.
And they have rewarded me evil for good, 5
And hatred for my love.
Set thou a wicked man over him: 6
And let an adversary stand at his right hand.

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so the versions. But parallelism favours 'the mouth of wickedness,' i, e. the wicked mouth.

have they opened: read with LXX, Pesh., Jero. 'is opened.' Perhaps the M. T. is due to the idea that foes are referred to, and not one foe.

3–5. In these verses the M. T. and the versions assume a plurality of foes.

3. Cf. Jer. xviii. 18.

4. Render: 'In return for my love (to them) they slander me: But I (take refuge) in prayer.'

are my adversaries: Heb. 'they slander me,' the verb being cognate to 'Satan.' The same verb occurs in verses 20, 29, and the noun in verse 6.

I *give myself unto* prayer: Heb. 'I (am) prayer.' By a common Hebrew idiom words in the predicative relation stand in the loose connexion called apposition: so cx. 3, cxx. 7. See on cxix. 75 for the employment of nouns as adjectives.

6–20. *Sundry curses uttered against some well-known enemy.* Who is the enemy that is meant? There can be no certainty on the matter: the answers have included Saul, Doeg, Ahithophel, Shimei, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Alqimus: they are dictated by the view taken of the date and occasion of the Psalm.

6. Render: 'Set thou over him as superior officer' (here 'judge,' see verse 7) 'a wicked man: And let a lying accuser stand at his right hand.'

Set . . . over: the Hebrew verb is that translated in the LXX by the verb which means 'make an overseer, make a bishop over,' in the strict sense of bishop—an overlooker (not one that overlooks!). So in verse 8 'his office' is literally 'his overseership,' his 'bishopric.'

adversary: Heb. 'Satan': i. e. one that brings false charges against any person with malicious intent. LXX *diabolos*: the Greek cognate verb (= Heb. *Satan*) occurs in Luke xvi. 1.

7 When he is judged, let him come forth guilty;
And let his prayer be turned into sin.
8 Let his days be few;
And let another take his office.
9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
10 Let his children be vagabonds, and beg;
And let them seek *their bread* out of their desolate places.

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7. When he is judged: Heb. 'When he goes to law': 'When he has a lawsuit on hand.'

guilty: the strict sense of the Hebrew word generally translated 'wicked,' though the usual sense is derived and secondary. The verb in the causative form (*Hiphil*) = to pronounce guilty.

let his prayer be turned into sin: let the prayer intended to obtain pardon be followed by greater guilt. The prayer of a wicked unrepenting man increases his wickedness.

8. This verse means: 'Let him die young: Yet even before his short life is closed let him lose the position of trust which he now has.'

8[b] is quoted *verbatim* from the LXX in Peter's speech to the assembly of 120 brethren (Acts i. 20). In the same part of the speech lxix. 25 is also quoted (Acts i. 20), but the latter is altered so as to make the words refer to one enemy—Judas.

To make Psalms lxix, cix wholly Messianic, the utterance of Christ concerning His enemies is so unreasonable and so blasphemous that one wonders that this has been done. See Introduction, 'The Messianic idea in the Psalms,' pp. 12 f.

In verses 9–15 the curse is made to embrace the man's relatives, wife, children, and even children's children (see Exod. xx. 5). This is in accordance with the provision of the ancient law contained in the Book of the Covenant: see Exod. xx. 5. It must be remembered that the feeling of solidarity (as before stated) was much stronger in the ancient than in the modern world: see on cvi. 6.

9. Some have inferred from this verse that Judas had a wife and children!

10. Render: 'Let them (children and wife: see verse 9) homelessly wander about, and beg hard (for bread): And let them be driven from their ruined houses.'

his children: omit on metrical and other grounds.

let them seek: better read, 'let them be driven,' so LXX, and most moderns. The Hebrew in both cases is much alike.

desolate places: Heb. 'ruins': i. e. their ruined homesteads.

Let the extortioner catch all that he hath ; 11
And let strangers make spoil of his labour.
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him ; 12
Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children.
Let his posterity be cut off ; 13
In the generation following let their name be blotted out.
Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the 14
LORD ;
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
Let them be before the LORD continually, 15
That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

---

11. Render : 'Let the creditor seek whatever belongs to him : And let strangers take as booty what he has laboured for.'

catch : read (with LXX, Jero.), 'seek,' changing one letter.

his labour : here the produce of labour is meant.

12. This verse refers back to the situation implied in verse 11. 'When oppressed by creditors and robbed by strangers, let him and after his death his fatherless children, lack kind and gracious helpers.'

extend mercy = 'continue to be kind.'

have pity on : Heb. 'be gracious to.'

13. posterity : this meaning of the Hebrew word is supported by parallelism. Duhm thinks the word stands here, as in xxxvii. 38, for the life beyond death, 'Let his future life be taken from him. See Introd. pp. 14 ff.

their name : read, '*his* **name**,' with LXX, Jero., Duhm.

14. his fathers : 'his *father*' is what we should have expected, corresponding to **his mother** : but the versions have all of them the plural.

The curse in this verse is to be understood in the light of Exod. xx. 5, and means, 'Let the iniquity of the parents be visited upon their children.' Note once more the solidarity of kith and kin : see on verses 9-15.

be blotted out : from God's book of remembrance : see li. 1.

15. Let them : i. e. the iniquity of the fathers and the sin of the mother (verse 14).

the memory of them : read. *his* **memory**, with LXX, Duhm : this is supported by the sense and by the use of the verb **remember** in the singular in the next verse.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
And the broken in heart, to slay *them*.
17 Yea, he loved cursing, and it came unto him;
And he delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him.
18 He clothed himself also with cursing as with his garment,
And it came into his inward parts like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be unto him as the raiment wherewith he covereth himself,
And for the girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
20 This is the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD,
And of them that speak evil against my soul.
21 But deal thou with me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake:

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16. This verse contains the apodosis to verse 15, giving the reason why the sins of the parents should be perpetually before Jehovah: so most exegetes.

remembered not: 'took no thought of,' the strict sense of the Hebrew.

mercy: Heb. 'lovingkindness.'

to slay *them*: read, 'even to death.' So Pesh., Duhm. The M.T. is harsh if not incorrect.

17 f. describe the conduct of the enemy. It is better to construe the second clause in each line of these two verses as prophetic perfects or perfects of certainty. It will not then be necessary to alter the Hebrew verbs, making them imperfects as Duhm does. Translate these verses then as follows: 17. '(And) he loved cursing, and it will be sure to come to him: (And) he took no pleasure in blessing, and it will be sure to be far from him.' 18. '(And) he put on cursing as his garment, And it will be sure to come into his inward parts like water, And like oil in his bones': so the LXX, Jero., Arabic.

18. oil among bones is very hard to be got rid of.

19. A wish—that the curser may be overwhelmed with curses, as with a garment: that curses may cling to him as closely as the girdle fastened round his waist.

mine adversaries: Heb. 'my Satans' = my false and malicious accusers.

21–31. *Prayer for pity and deliverance.*

21. deal . . . with: the word 'kindness' is either to be under-

Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me,
For I am poor and needy, 22
And my heart is wounded within me.
I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: 23
I am tossed up and down as the locust.
My knees are weak through fasting; 24
And my flesh faileth of fatness.
I am become also a reproach unto them: 25
When they see me, they shake their head.
Help me, O LORD my God; 26
O save me according to thy mercy:

---

stood or it must be supplied. We have in the latter case the regular formula for 'showing kindness.'

GOD: i. e. Jehovah: see on cviii. 3.

name's sake: for the sake of thy character; the prosperity of the Israelite carries with it the honour of the God he serves.

Because thy mercy, &c.: render, 'according to the goodness of thy lovingkindness, deliver thou me': so LXX, Jero., Targ.; cf. xxv. 7, xxxi. 19, cxix. 124.

22. poor: i. e. afflicted, unhappy (subjective).

needy: i. e. poor, destitute (objective).

23. declineth: render, 'lengthens,' and see on cii. 11. The Psalmist compares himself to the lengthening shadows of evening: his day is nearing its close.

tossed up and down, &c.: i. e. I am shaken off from the land of the living as the locust is tossed off from the garment to which it clings.

24. are weak: Heb. 'totter,' 'give way.'

faileth: 'becomes lean.'

of fatness: 'for lack of oil' (cf. **through fasting**): olive oil still forms a very important element in Palestine food.

25. Besides his pining away in suffering and poverty his enemies mock him to scorn.

they shake their head: in contempt; see xxii. 7, &c.

26-31. There is no need with Delitzsch, &c., to separate these verses from verses 21-25. The same thought is preserved, and there is nothing in the form of the poetry to suggest a separate strophe. Hebrew poets did not bind themselves to write in strophes.

26. See xxxi. 16.

27 That they may know that this is thy hand;
That thou, LORD, hast done it.
28 Let them curse, but bless thou:
When they arise, they shall be ashamed, but thy servant shall rejoice.
29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with dishonour,
And let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a mantle.
30 I will give great thanks unto the LORD with my mouth;
Yea, I will praise him among the multitude.
31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the needy,
To save him from them that judge his soul.

110 A Psalm of David.

1 The LORD saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand,

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27. this: i. e. the deliverance prayed for in verse 26.

thy hand = 'the work of thy hand,' as in lxxviii. 14: cf. 'the finger of God' in Exod. viii. 19, an expression still used in English.

28. When they arise, &c.: read (with LXX, &c.): 'Those who rise against me shall be put to shame' (= 'be foiled').

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

29. Let them not only feel ashamed (foiled), but let their shame be manifest to others, as an outside garment.

mine adversaries: Heb. 'those who *Satan* me' = 'who falsely accuse me.'

mantle: the outer garment, the overall: so that which every one could see.

31. he shall stand at the right hand, &c.: the false accusers—the Satans—will be at the right hand to accuse (see on verse 6): but Jehovah to bless.

PSALM CX.

Theme. Invitation to the priest-king to share Jehovah's throne.

I. *Contents.* (1) Promise to the king of universal dominion (verses 1–3).

(2) The king is to be likewise priest (verse 4).

(3) Promise to this priest-king of victory over all his enemies (verses 5–7).

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. ii, xxi, xlv, and cx all refer to some reigning king, but there is no conclusive evidence for deciding which. David cannot be meant in the present Psalm, notwithstanding the title, for he is never called a priest, and the style and thought of the Psalm belong to a much later time than his. Most modern scholars agree that one of the Maccabean princes is intended. During the Persian and the Syrian suzerainty of Palestine the high priest was also the Governor. Perhaps one of these priest-rulers is the subject of the present Psalm. After the victory of the Maccabees over Syria, Judas and his successors became virtually civil rulers, kings. The first of these, however, to exercise royal and priestly functions was Jonathan (d. B.C. 143). Simon, his successor, was the first to be recognized by the Jews themselves as both civil and religious head, and most moderns see in him the person addressed in this Psalm. He alone received the high priesthood from the people, and the present Psalm is believed to have been put forth as the Divine sanction of the appointment.

Is the Psalm Messianic? Looking at it by itself, and without prepossession, one would not say that it is, for the writer has in mind some actual ruler of his own day, and his references are to events of his own time. But in the N. T. this Psalm is more than once quoted in reference to Christ, as by the Master Himself[1], by Peter[2], by Paul[3], and by the author of Hebrews[4].

An examination of the several O. T. passages quoted Messianically in the N. T. makes it clear that they are adduced, not because they had originally that application, but because they embody principles realized in the life and death of Jesus. Some texts from the O. T. are given a meaning in the N. T. which no modern exegete claims to be the sense of the original words. Many take refuge in the doctrine of the 'Kenosis,' that Christ in His humiliation subjected Himself to human limitations of knowledge, &c.[5] Others see in the use made of the O. T. by Christ, Peter, &c. examples of *ad hominem* arguments: the Jews are met on their own ground, their own Messianic interpretation of the O. T. being made the basis for argument. But he that has the Son has life, and this to its possessor is unanswerable proof of the Messiahship and Saviourhood of Him who was sent to seek and to save the lost.

1. Jehovah's oracle: the king is to share Jehovah's throne, and to have his dominion extended.

[1] Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42 f.
[2] Acts ii. 34 f. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 25. [4] Heb. i. 13.
[5] See Phil. ii. 7: cf. Mark xiii. 32.

2 The LORD shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
3 Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power:
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,

Sit thou, &c. = 'Share thou my royal prerogative': the idea being that God is the true king of His people, earthly kings receiving their power from Him.

at my right hand: the place of highest honour; see 1 Kings ii. 19. Among the ancient Arabs the king's co-rider (his *ridf*) acted for him in his absence and, when necessary, otherwise.

Until I make, &c.: this rendering, supported by the ancient versions, and implied in 1 Cor. xv. 24 f., means that the priest-king will cease to share Jehovah's throne when his foes have been subdued. But the sense of the Hebrew is, 'So that I may make,' &c.: so Baethgen, Wellhausen, &c.

footstool: it was a custom in ancient times for conquerors to place their feet on the necks or prostrate bodies of the conquered; see Joshua x. 24: the language here is derived from that practice, though the thing itself is hardly meant.

2. Verse 1 contains the oracle proper: in the following verses its content is developed.

send forth: i. e. extend.

the rod of thy strength: Heb. 'thy rod of strength,' i. e. thy powerful sceptre; see Jer. xlviii. 17; Ezek. xix. 11–14. The rod or sceptre here is the sign of authority, and has nothing to do with punishing as such; cf. 'rule thou' in the next clause.

Before **rule thou** 'saying' is understood: the words are Jehovah's.

3. offer themselves willingly: Heb. 'are willingnesses,' a Hebrew way of saying 'they are very willing' (plural of intensity); cf. the English 'He is all generosity,' and see on cix. 4.

in the day of thy power: render: 'in the day of thy host' or 'army': i. e. in the day when thy army marches forth against the foe. So Targ. and most moderns.

The people ought to be ready to fight, not when the king has reached power, but before that, so that he may attain to power.

In the beauties of holiness: read, 'on the holy mountains': i. e. the mountains round about Jerusalem; see lxxxvii. 1. So Sym., Jero., and several MSS. and editions. Two very similar Hebrew letters (*d* and *r*) have been here, as often, confounded.

from the womb of the morning: these words are closely

Thou hast the dew of thy youth.
The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, 4
Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.
The Lord at thy right hand 5

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connected with the following as well as with the words immediately preceding, which have just been noticed. The dew with which the young men are compared is morning dew, such as issued from the womb of the morning, i.e. it is fresh, pure. **Youth** means here as elsewhere 'young men' (see Eccles. xi. 9 f.). We must understand the 'dew of thy young men' as meaning (the fresh morning) dew which is (symbolizes) thy young men: cf. 'Garden of Eden' = 'the Garden which is Eden.' The young heroes who will so readily take up arms on behalf of the new ruler are described as marching on the holy mountains around Jerusalem, with energy as fresh and pure as the morning dew.

The LXX renders 'From the womb, before the day star I begat thee.' Many of the early fathers quoted this rendering in proof of the eternal generation of the Son. Their knowledge of the O. T. was obtained from the Greek versions only—with few exceptions.

4. The king is to be also priest: render: 'Thou art a priest for ever because of Jehovah, O righteous king.'

(**a priest**) **for ever**: to be taken in the sense required by the context, here for the whole extent of the king's life. In 1 Macc. xiv. 61 the corresponding Greek expression is used of Simon's reign.

After the order of: this is a translation of the LXX and Jero.; similarly the Pesh. ('like Melchizedek'). The Hebrew can only mean 'on account of,' 'because of,' i. e. because appointed by. The expression is late Hebrew, and occurs in Eccles. iii. 18, vii. 14, viii. 2, and with a trivial change in Pss. xlv. 5, lxxix. 9, &c. But a 'priest . . . because of Melchizedek' has no meaning. The noun in this phrase has an appended letter (*yod*), which in late Hebrew is a common abbreviation of *Yahweh* (Jehovah). Or we may render, 'Thou art a priest through me,' i. e. because I have appointed thee. The LXX version is followed in Heb. vii. 11, cf. verse 13. The proper name Melchizedek, notwithstanding its associations, has to be surrendered. The king addressed was, perhaps, Simon Maccabee.

5–7. *Promise to the priest-king of victory over his enemies.*

5. at thy right hand: see on verse 1. Here, however, the scene is transferred to the battlefield: see xvi. 8, cix. 31, cxxi. 5.

Shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
6 He shall judge among the nations,
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies;
He shall strike through the head in many countries.
7 He shall drink of the brook in the way:
Therefore shall he lift up the head.

111 Praise ye the LORD.

Shall strike through: better, 'shall shatter.' The future is certainly right: cf. **He shall judge,** in verse 6. The Hebrew tense is a case of the 'perfect of certainty'; see below.

in the day of his wrath: the day on which He will vent His wrath by punishing the rebellious nations.

6. Render: 'He shall exercise rule over the heathen nations: He will fill with corpses (the countries where He will wage battle): He will smite rulers (collective) over much land.'

The two latter verbs are examples of the 'perfect of certainty': 'He will certainly fill' . . . 'smite.'

7. The subject of this verse is suddenly changed. In verse 6 Jehovah is almost certainly the subject: here it is the king, though we can gather that from the sense only.

The king in his career of conquest will stop and refresh himself by the brook's edge: then he will on with uplifted head—confident and joyous.

PSALMS CXI ff.

Hallelujah Psalms.

The following are strictly 'Hallelujah Psalms,' i. e. they have *Hallelujah* at the beginning (where alone it originally stood: see Introduction to Ps. cv), or at the end, or both: civ–cvi, cxi–cxiii, cxv–cxvii, cxxxv, cxlvi–cl. In Ps. cxxxv we have the word in the body of the same (verse 3) as well as in the beginning of it—there is no other example of this. We never meet with the formula in the O. T. outside the above Psalms, nor is it a part of the original Psalm except in Ps. cxxxv. 3: the Alphabetic Psalms (cxi f.) put this beyond question: see on cxi. 1.

In the Hebrew this formula is made up of two words meaning *lit.* 'Praise ye Yah': in the E.VV. it occurs as 'Praise ye the LORD.' The ancient scribes disputed much and warmly as to whether the formula should be written as two words or as a compound. In the Greek and Latin versions, and in the texts of Baer and Delitzsch and Ginsburg, it is treated as one word.

The Hallel. That some collection of Psalms called the 'Great Hallel or the 'Egyptian Hallel' was sung during the celebration of the

I will give thanks unto the LORD with my whole heart,
In the council of the upright, and in the congregation.
The works of the LORD are great,
Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. 2

Passover is supported by all Jewish authorities, but opinions differ much as to what Psalms the collection embraced. This much, however, seems certain, that in our Lord's day no such 'Hallel' collection of Psalms had been made, so that it is an evident mistake to say, as is constantly done, that the Master and His disciples sang the Hallel on the evening of the first Lord's Supper. It may be added that 'Hallel' is simply a contraction of 'Hallelujah.' Ps. cxiv has, probably, no right to be considered one of the 'Hallel' or 'Hallelujah' Psalms, for the word 'Hallelujah' is not found in it, nor is the note of praise so manifest as in the rest of the group—Pss. cxi–cxviii.

PSALM CXI.

Theme. The praiseworthiness of Jehovah.

I. *Contents.* Alike in form and in substance Ps. cxi f. are nearly allied, and there is good reason for supposing that they sprang out of the same circumstances and had the same author. In Ps. cxi the praises of Jehovah are sung, in Ps. cxii the prosperity and virtues of His people. Both are alphabetic acrostics, and in both it is the acrostic arrangement that dominates the order of thought, and not the thought itself, so that an analysis of either Psalm cannot be attempted. Both Psalms depend much on earlier ones and also on Proverbs, as to matter and language.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of Ps. cxi f. on other Psalms and on other parts of the O.T., the language of the Psalm, and their acrostic form—these show that the two Psalms are very late productions; but nothing more definite can be safely said.

1. *ālēph, bēth.*

Praise ye the LORD: (*Hallelujah*) this belongs to the title and not to the Psalm itself; otherwise the Psalm does not begin with *ālēph.*

council: a company of men bound together by common and peculiar interests: almost like our 'club.'

congregation: the festive gatherings seem intended. It is not likely that the synagogue is meant, as it is fairly certain that worship formed no part of the proceedings in that institution until after the final destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A. D. 71; see on lxxiv. 8.

2. *gīmēl, dālēth.*

Sought out: rather (as Jero.), 'to be sought out': see on xcvi. 4.

3 His work is honour and majesty:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:
The LORD is gracious and full of compassion.
5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him:
He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works,
In giving them the heritage of the nations.
7 The works of his hands are truth and judgement;
All his precepts are sure.

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3. *hē, wāw.*

His work: rather, 'His doing.'

honour and majesty: we should say 'honourable' (or rather 'glorious') 'and majestic.' In Hebrew nouns are used very commonly for adjectives: see on cix. 4.

4. *zain, khēth.*

He hath made . . . to be remembered: Heb. 'He has made a memorial for His marvellous deeds.' The Hebrew word for 'memorial' may be used of a commemorative deed or of a festival, see xxx. 4. A variant of the same word occurs in Exod. xii. 14 for Passover, and Luther, Hupfeld, &c., think that the Passover is here referred to. It is probably in reference to this word that Luther calls the present Psalm a Paschal or Easter Psalm.

5. *ṭēth, yōdh.*

meat: better, 'nourishment,' as in Prov. xxxi. 5. The Hebrew word is rare, and is selected because it begins with *ṭēth*, the appropriate letter in the acrostic.

covenant: to be understood in the general sense which the word bears in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, &c.

6. *kaph, lāmēdh.*

the power, &c.: i. e. the power displayed in what He did for His people: this power appeared on a large scale when He enabled them to possess the lands of the heathen.

nations: the Hebrew word means in the plural almost invariably 'the heathen.'

7. *mēm, nūn.*

God's acts display both faithfulness and righteousness.

truth: better. 'faithfulness.'

judgement: justice.

precepts: what He has enjoined: see xix. 8. Here, however, His principles of world-government are meant: these will never fail.

They are established for ever and ever, 8
They are done in truth and uprightness.
He hath sent redemption unto his people; 9
He hath commanded his covenant for ever:
Holy and reverend is his name.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; 10
A good understanding have all they that do thereafter:
His praise endureth for ever.

Praise ye the LORD. **112**
Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD,

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9. *pē, tsādhe.*

redemption (Heb. *peduth*, see on lxxiv. 2): the primary reference is to the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. vii. 8 and often); but some recent act of deliverance is in the writer's mind.

commanded: i.e. ordained, as such. 'To command a covenant' = to set up, make a covenant, as in cv. 8.

reverend: to be feared.

his name = 'Jehovah Himself as revealed.'

9^b refers to the legislation on Sinai as 9^a does to the preceding deliverance from Egypt.

10. *rēsh, shīn, tāw.*

The fear of the LORD, &c.: taken from Prov. i. 7, ix. 10; cf. Job xxviii. 28; Eccles. i. 20. This is the fundamental principle of the Wisdom School of Philosophy. Wisdom consists in the fear of God: in proper reverence for Him. 'The fear of Jehovah' is suggested by the last part of verse 9, 'to be feared is His name.'

that do thereafter: Heb. 'that do them,' i. e. the precepts: but this word is too far back: read (with LXX, Pesh., Jero.), 'that do (or practise) it' (i. e. the fear of Jehovah); see Prov. i. 7.

His praise: His praiseworthiness: what in Him is praiseworthy.

PSALM CXII.

Theme. The good fortune of those who fear Jehovah.

For introductory remarks see Introduction to Ps. cxi.

1. *ālēph, bēth.*

Praise ye the LORD: see on cxi. 1.

Blessed: see on lxxxiv. 4.

that feareth the LORD: taking up 'the fear of the LORD' in cxi. 10, and pointing to the intimate relation between the two Psalms.

That delighteth greatly in his commandments.
2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth:
The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches are in his house:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness:
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 Well is it with the man that dealeth graciously and lendeth;
He shall maintain his cause in judgement.
6 For he shall never be moved;

That delighteth greatly: see cxi. 2; cf. xl. 8, cxix. 35, 97.

2. *gīmēl, dālēth.*

mighty: here the word has the general meaning of powerful, and not the sense 'mighty in war' which it generally has. This Hebrew word is selected because it begins with the proper acrostic letter (*g*).

3. *hē, wāw.*

Wealth: in the Old English sense of well-being.

righteousness: in cxi. 3 the word stands for God's righteousness as a moral quality: here it denotes man's, but in the sense common in Isa. xl ff.; cf. Ps. xxiv. 5, i. e. man's happiness and safety as secured by the Divine righteousness.

4. *zain, khēth.*

Render: 'Light arises in the darkness to the upright—The gracious, the compassionate, and the righteous.'

Throughout this Psalm the faithful man is described in terms applied in Ps. cxi to God; hence Hengstenberg calls Ps. cxii a 'holy parody' of Ps. cxi. The three adjectives in 4^b refer to the **upright** man and not to God.

light and **darkness** stand here for joy and sorrow, as in Isa. lviii. 10.

5. *tēth, yōdh.*

He shall maintain, &c.: render, 'who supports his cause justly': when he makes a loan he takes no undue advantage of the borrower, as was then and is now often done.

in judgement does not mean here 'when he goes to law,' but 'with justice,' i. e. justly. The Hebrew can mean either.

6. *kaph, lāmēdh.*

For: better, 'surely,' though the Hebrew word (translated in Exod. iii. 12 'certainly') means either. This verse contains two independent statements concerning the good man.

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.
He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: 7
His heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, 8
Until he see *his desire* upon his adversaries.
He hath dispersed, he hath given to the needy; 9
His righteousness endureth for ever:
His horn shall be exalted with honour.
The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; 10

The righteous: the rhythm of the verse gains by omitting these words as Baethgen does. The subject of 6^a is also that of 6^b, 'he,' &c. (see verse 5).

The righteous . . . remembrance: see xxxvii. 36 f.; Prov. x. 7; Sir. xliv. 1–15. This is the immortality hoped for by the Psalmists—to be remembered for what they shall have done; they show no inkling of any other: see Introduction, pp. 14 ff.

7. *mēm, nūn.*

trusting: the word upsets the rhythm of the Hebrew, and is no doubt a gloss originally inserted in the margin to explain **fixed** (= steadfast).

8. *sāmēkh, 'ain.*

established: the word is used in Ps. cxi. 8 of God's injunctions (precepts): it means literally 'supported,' 'held up,' and has here the same sense as the word rendered 'fixed' in verse 7. The present word is selected in both Psalms owing to the exigency of the acrostic form of the two Psalms.

see *his desire* upon: the Hebrew expression, *lit.* 'to look upon' = 'to gaze on with glee,' 'to feast one's eyes on': see note on xcii. 11 and cf. cxviii. 7. It is not the highest point in ethics or religion to rejoice in the downfall of one's enemies: but God trained His people gradually; the highest lessons were not taught until the lower ones had been mastered—the method adopted by wise teachers now.

9. *pē, tsādhe, qōph.*

His righteousness, &c.: same sense as in verse 3: this is supported by the next clause.

His horn, &c.: in lxxv. 4 f. the arrogant are pictured as tossing up their horn. Here the horn of the righteous (= prosperous) ones goes up of its own accord. Those who abase themselves shall be exalted: see lxxxix. 24. For the expression 'exalting the horn' see on lxxv. 4.

10. *rēsh, shīn, tāw.*

shall see it, and be grieved: contrast with this what is said

He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away:
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

113 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise, O ye servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD.
2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and for evermore.

---

of the righteous one in verse 8[b], he shall feast his eyes on the ruin of the wicked; here too the wicked open their eyes, but only to see what grieves them.

The desire, &c.: i. e. the thing desired, as in lxxviii. 29, &c. We must, however, read 'hope' here as most moderns do. The Hebrew words are much alike.

PSALMS CXIII—CXVIII.

The name the 'Egyptian Hallel' has been given to Pss. cxiii–cxviii: see *Hallelujah Psalms*, pp. 226 f.

Ps. cxiv lacks the title 'Hallelujah,' though it has it in the LXX, and it is probably to be restored to the Hebrew; yet this Psalm is not so manifestly a 'hallel' or 'praise' Psalm as the other 'Hallelujah' Psalms.

PSALM CXIII.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah because of His greatness and goodness.

I. *Contents.* (1) The summons to praise Jehovah (verses 1–3).
(2) The grounds on which the summons rests.
(*a*) Jehovah is lofty and glorious (verses 4 f.).
(*b*) He has condescended to help His creatures (verses 6–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. cxiii and cxiv have much in common; both are generally traced to the feeling of joy and gratitude which prevailed among the Jews soon after the return from Babylon, and may be the work of the same author.

1–3. *A summons to praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise ye the LORD: see on cxi. 1. By making this a part of the Psalm we destroy the symmetry of the Psalm, which without it is made up of a number of distichs.

servants of the LORD: verse 3 shows that Delitzsch, &c., are wrong in restricting the words to the true Israel.

name: 'to praise Jehovah's name' = 'to praise Him as He is revealed.'

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same 3
The LORD's name is to be praised.
The LORD is high above all nations, 4
And his glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto the LORD our God, 5
That hath his seat on high,
That humbleth himself to behold 6
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, 7
And lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;

---

3. See l. 1 : cf. Isa. lix. 19; Zeph. iii. 9; Mal. i. 11.

4–9. *Why Jehovah should be praised.*

4 f. Jehovah is great.

4. all nations: here the word which in the plural means nearly always 'the heathen' means 'all nations—including Israel': so xcix. 2.

high above = 'higher than': a rare form of the comparative: found also in Hellenistic Greek (*hyper*).

his glory (is) **above the heavens** = '(is) more glorious than the heavens.' See xix. 1: the heavens, being His handiwork, declare His glory; but His personal glory far transcends that of sun, moon, and stars.

6–9. *Jehovah's condescension to help His people.*

6. Render: 'who stoops to look from the heaven upon the earth?'

***The things that are*:** not in the Hebrew, and not required for the sense.

in heaven: we must certainly read 'from the heavens.' All the following clauses refer to God's doings on the earth.

and in the earth: render, 'upon the earth.' The 'and' was inserted to make sense after a copyist had accidentally written 'in' instead of '*from* the heavens.'

7. poor: the Hebrew word means primarily those reduced in position: the idea of poverty is a derived one. Jehovah lifts up men who have sunk as low down in the social scale as possible (cf. **the dust**).

dunghill: the Heb. = 'dung itself': then it came to stand for those heaps of dung and other débris which used to be in front of Oriental houses. Beggars and lepers were wont to sit on these artificial hills, soliciting by looks and gestures, if not by words, the

8 That he may set him with princes,
Even with the princes of his people.
9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
And to be a joyful mother of children.
Praise ye the LORD.

114 When Israel went forth out of Egypt,

---

gifts of the inmates of the houses. Jehovah causes the unfortunate denizens of these dunghills to rise to high stations.

8. See Job xxxvi. 7, and cf. 2 Sam. ix. 7.

9. The language of this verse was suggested to a large extent by that of 1 Sam. ii. 5; see Isa. liv. 1, lxvi. 8.

9. Praise ye the LORD (= Hallelujah). In the LXX this formula is rightly transferred to the beginning of Ps. cxiv.

PSALM CXIV.

Theme. The consternation of nature at Jehovah's marvellous deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

This is one of the most charming lyrics in the Psalter, alike in structure, language, and thought. Its parallelism is as near perfection as that of any part of the O. T.

Dante makes spirits redeemed from the bondage of the flesh sing this Psalm as they are about entering Purgatory:

> '*In exitu Israel de Egypto.*
> Sang all together in one voice,
> With what of that Psalm is thereafter written[1].'

I. *Title:* **Praise ye the LORD** (= Hallelujah), wrongly put at the end of Ps. cxiii in the M.T.

II. *Contents.* (1) The consternation of nature at the marvel of the Exodus (verses 1–4).

(2) That Exodus was a sign of the Divine presence: well might therefore nature be affrighted (verses 5–8).

This Psalm is combined with the following Psalm in the LXX, Theod., Pesh., Arab., Eth., and in many MSS. of the Hebrew: but these make two psalms out of Psalm cxvi, thus leaving the number of psalms in the group cxiii–cxviii the same, viz. six.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxiii.

1–4. *Nature amazed.* The deliverance from Egypt is naturally recalled by other deliverances (Babylon, &c.).

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[1] *Purgatory*, ii. 46 ff.

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
Judah became his sanctuary, 2
Israel his dominion.
The sea saw it, and fled; 3
Jordan was driven back.
The mountains skipped like rams, 4
The little hills like young sheep.
What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest? 5
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams; 6
Ye little hills, like young sheep?
Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, 7

---

1. a people of strange language: in post-Biblical Hebrew a substantive cognate to the word translated 'strange language' = 'a foreign tongue.' No form of the root occurs in the O.T. except here (where it is a participle). The Egyptian language was strange to the Israelites when they entered the land of the Pharaohs: see Gen. xlii. 23.

2. Judah and **Israel** are only poetically distinct: there was now no Israel except Judah, and there is an implication that the northern kingdom never had the Divine sanction, since the only recognized sanctuary is in Judah.

3. See Exod. xiv. 19–24.

The Red Sea and the Jordan are personified. As soon as they saw their Maker drawing near at the head of His people they retired, leaving an open way for the people to cross. 'Awe-struck nature recognized and obeyed its Master's will' (Kirkpatrick).

saw—what? Jehovah leading His people: this is shown by verse 7 and by the similar passages lxxvii. 16; Hab. iii. 10; cf. xcvii. 4.

was driven back: Heb. 'turned back.'

4. mountains and hills (not **little hills**) skipped (= danced) for fear: the figure is borrowed from xxix. 6, the imagery here referring to the trembling of Mount Sinai when Jehovah manifested Himself, Exod. xix. 18; see lxviii. 9; Judges v. 5.

5–8. *Explanation of the consternation of nature.*

5 f. Note the striking apostrophe to the sea, the Jordan, and the mountains, for the sake of explaining more graphically the extraordinary effect of the Divine appearance.

7 f. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, the poet

At the presence of the God of Jacob;
8 Which turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

115 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,

---

says that all the earth (mountains, &c.) might well writhe in agony at the approach of its Maker.

7. Tremble: render, 'Be in pangs': the verb is used of the pains of childbirth.

8. For the two wilderness incidents here spoken of see on lxxviii. 15.

pool of water, fountain of waters: both from Isa. xli. 18.

flint: see Deut. viii. 15, 'rock of flint.'

PSALM CXV.

Theme. Jehovah's help is sought in some unknown emergency. He alone is the true God, and He is alone therefore to be trusted in and worshipped.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to Jehovah for help since the humiliation of His people is His own humiliation (verses 1–3).

(2) The gods of the heathen are helpless, and therefore cannot help (verses 4–8).

(3) Israel is urged to seek refuge in Jehovah who can and does help (verses 9–11).

(4) Jehovah has blessed and will continue to bless Israel (verses 12–18).

This Psalm was composed for temple use, and was probably intended, as Ps. cxxxvi, &c., to be sung antiphonally, though the rapid changes of person, tense, and number are no proof of this last, since in Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew poetry such sudden transitions are frequent.

Assuming that the Psalm is antiphonal (so Ewald, Köster, &c.) the following arrangement of parts is suggested:

1–8 the whole temple choir.
9^a first batch of singers.
9^b second batch of singers.
10^a first batch of singers.
10^b second batch of singers.
11^a first batch of singers.
11^b second batch of singers.
12 the whole temple choir.
13 first batch of singers.
14 f. second batch of singers.
16–18 the whole temple choir.

Though LXX, Theod., Pesh., Jero., and many MSS. join this

But unto thy name give glory,
For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.
Wherefore should the nations say, 2
Where is now their God?
But our God is in the heavens: 3
He hath done whatsoever he pleased.
Their idols are silver and gold, 4

Psalm to that which precedes, the style and contents differ so much that these Psalms must originally have been quite distinct.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The appeal in verses 1-3 seems to imply that the nation is passing through a period of suffering, though whether that suffering is due to the persecution of the Samaritan party in the fifth century B. C., or to the action of the Syrians and the Syrian party over two centuries later, or to some other cause, there is no data for determining. The prominence given in the Psalm to priests, and its silence regarding king and prophets, prove that the Psalm is, at least, post-exilic.

Hitzig sees in Pss. cxv-cxviii a kind of poetical drama in which the incidents of Jonathan's life are portrayed, from his military expedition into Galilee (cxv) to his triumphant return to the Jerusalem temple (cxviii): see 1 Macc. xi.

1-3. *Jehovah is entreated to help for His own honour's sake* (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 23^b).

1. We seek thy aid not that glory may come to us by the resulting victory, but that thy lovingkindness (not **mercy**) and faithfulness (not **truth**) to thy own may be displayed. See a similar prayer in Dan. ix. 18 f. Thus will God's name, i. e. His character, be revealed.

2 = lxxix. 10, cf. xlii. 3, 10; Exod. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 13 ff.; Joel ii. 17; Mic. vii. 10.

nations: better, 'heathen.'

now: a different Hebrew word from the adverb of time = 'now.' It is the rhetorical 'now': 'Where, prithee, is that God of theirs?' This particle is absent from lxxix. 10, which otherwise agrees exactly with the present verse.

3. in the heavens: i. e. He is not material, visible, tangible. The words assert the spirituality of Jehovah. If they meant only 'He lives in heaven,' 'is confined to heaven,' that would have been also a low view of deity.

4-8. *Helplessness of the gods of the heathen.* In this section it seems taken for granted that the god of the heathen is the material object, that alone: no note at all is taken of any *numen* or spiritual

The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
6 They have ears, but they hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
7 They have hands, but they handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not;
Neither speak they through their throat.

---

being residing within the object. There is the same underlying assumption in cxxxv. 6, 15-21 (practically = our verses 4-10), in Deut. iv. 28, and in the brilliant irony of Isa. xliv. 9-20. Is this a fair view to take of heathenism? In itself no. It is impossible to think of any rational being sinking so low as this. Carlyle writes: 'Idol . . . is not God, but a symbol of God: and perhaps one may question whether any, the most benighted, mortal ever took it for more than a symbol[1].' One may surely more than question anything so unlikely. But the heathen claimed for his religion the supposed advantage that his god had an outward embodiment: something to see, as in the case of man. It was a proper retort to make that the heathen god judged by his external form could do nothing.

4. Their idols: i. e. the idols of the heathen (verse 4). The LXX, Jero., Pesh. read 'the idols of the heathen'; so cxxxv. 15. The Hebrew word rendered **idol** means 'something formed,' 'fashioned.' **Idol** is the English form of the Greek word used in the LXX which = 'something seen.'

silver and gold: i. e. the idols were covered with those metals: not made of solid silver and gold.

5-7. Though these idols have apparently every bodily organ, they cannot perform any of the corresponding functions. In these verses we must render the imperfect tenses by 'cannot': 'they cannot speak, see, hear, smell,' &c.—a sense often conveyed by the Hebrew imperfect (not properly a tense).

7. Render: 'As regards their hands, they' (the idols) 'cannot handle' (= touch). 'As regards their feet, they' (the idols) 'cannot walk: Nor can they give forth any (inarticulate) sound with their throat.'

handle: the Hebrew means 'to touch,' 'to feel one's way' (in the dark).

Neither speak they: speaking is, however, referred to in

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[1] *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Lecture iv.

They that make them shall be like unto them ; 8
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.
O Israel, trust thou in the LORD : 9
He is their help and their shield.
O house of Aaron, trust ye in the LORD : 10
He is their help and their shield.
Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD : 11
He is their help and their shield.
The LORD hath been mindful of us ; he will bless *us* : 12
He will bless the house of Israel ;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
He will bless them that fear the LORD, 13
Both small and great.
The LORD increase you more and more, 14
You and your children.

---

verse 5 in connexion with the mouth. Here we must understand inarticulate sounds in the throat, which have not reached the stage of speech : even this much these idols are incapable of. The noun in xc. 9 is cognate with the verb here : see on this passage.

8. shall be : better, 'shall become.' Those who worship such helpless idols shall become themselves helpless : see 2 Kings xvii. 15 ; Isa. xliv. 9 f. ; Jer. ii. 5 ; Rom. i. 21–23.

9–11. *Israel urged to seek refuge in the all-helping Jehovah.*

In these verses three classes are addressed : **Israel** (verse 9), **house of Aaron**, and **ye that fear the LORD** ; we have the same threefold division in cxviii. 2–4 and in cxxxv. 19 f., only that in the latter case the 'house of Levi' is added. By the first we are to understand Israel as a whole, by the second the priests, and by the third proselytes—those who, though not of Abraham's seed, had his faith and inherited the promises made to him : see 1 Kings viii. 41 ; Isa. lvi. 6 ; Acts x. 2, 22, &c.

12–18. *Jehovah has blessed, will bless, Israel.*

12. hath been mindful of us : LXX, Jero. render as a participle : 'Jehovah having remembered us will bless us.'

Note the three classes : see on verses 9–11.

13. Both small and great : proselytes of every rank and position. For this way of expressing totality see 2 Kings xviii. 24, &c.

14. This wish refers to the whole nation, and was very appro-

15 Blessed are ye of the LORD,
Which made heaven and earth.
16 The heavens are the heavens of the LORD;
But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
17 The dead praise not the LORD,
Neither any that go down into silence;
18 But we will bless the LORD
From this time forth and for evermore.
Praise ye the LORD.

---

priate after the return from Babylon or after the decimation due to the Maccabean wars: cf. cxix. 87.

15. This verse expresses a wish as verse 14; render, 'May ye be blessed,' &c.

Which made heaven and earth: in contrast to idols, themselves the work of men's hands. Heaven and earth are thus separated as the abode respectively of God and man (but see on verse 3).

16. Heaven is Jehovah's, He dwells in it: but He has given to man the earth as a dwelling place. The rendering, 'the heaven of heaven belongs to Jehovah,' cannot be got out of the Hebrew, though it is that of the ancient versions.

17 f. A reason for praising Jehovah now. Soon we shall be in the silent land, still for ever. So let us praise Him now while we have life.

17. Note what is said of the dead, and see on lxxxvi. 13, lxxxviii. 10–13.

silence: a synonym for *Sheol*. Here and in xciv. 17 the LXX translates the word by 'Hades,' the Greek word for 'Sheol.' Cheyne (2) in both places substitutes the word rendered 'shadow of death' in cvii. 10, but on insufficient grounds.

The O. T. recognizes three places of abode:

(1) Heaven, where God and angels are.

(2) The earth, where man and animals live.

(3) Sheol (LXX *Hades*), whither men go after death.

Of a heavenly world in which redeemed man will dwell in the company of God and angels, or of a hell for the wicked, the O.T. says nothing; see Introd. pp. 14 ff.

18. From this time forth and for evermore = from the present moment until we die: the argument requires that 'for evermore' = 'until we enter the silent land, where all praise shall cease.'

Praise ye the LORD. This belongs to the beginning of Ps. cxvi, as in the LXX (not in Jero. also as Baethgen inaccurately says).

I love the LORD, because he hath heard 116
My voice and my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, 2
Therefore will I call *upon him* as long as I live.

PSALM CXVI.

Theme. The thanksgiving and vows of one who has been delivered out of great distress.

I. *Title.* Praise-ye-Yah = Hallelujah.

II. *Contents.* (1) Acknowledgement of Jehovah's goodness in delivering the singer out of some severe sickness, or from some other situation of danger (verses 1–6).

(2) Vows and promises of thanksgiving for what Jehovah has done (verses 7–19).

Observe the individualistic note that sounds throughout the Psalm. Whatever may be said in regard to the congregational character of other Psalms (see Introd. p. 19 ff.), at least in this one the poet tells out his own personal experiences and feelings.

The division of this Psalm in the LXX into two (verses 1–9; verses 10–19), each beginning with 'Hallelujah' ('Alleluiah'), and the uniting in the LXX of Pss. cxiv f. into a single Psalm, are both wrong as the contents of the Psalms prove, and both are probably due to liturgical considerations.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxv.

Two features of the Psalm argue its late date: (1) its dependence on other Psalms. (2) The large number of Aramaisms which it contains. No more definite statement can be hazarded.

1–6. *Jehovah's deliverance acknowledged.*

1. I love, &c.: The E.VV. give the sense and perhaps the original Hebrew text: but the present Hebrew text (M. T.) has 'I love, because Jehovah has heard,' &c. After 'I love' the object must in that case be understood from the next clause. In verse 2 the object (*upon him*) after **call** has to be supplied from the context.

hath heard: a small letter written twice by mistake must be omitted. The versions, however, retain it and render, 'will hear': but the Psalmist is singing of the past.

My voice and my supplications: render, 'the voice of my supplication' with LXX, Jero., Pesh., and according to usage; see xxviii. 2, 6, xxxi. 22, cxxx. 2, cxl. 6.

2. call: an echo of xviii. 3. 'To call upon God' = to worship Him.

The object—'upon Him'—must be supplied from the context.

3 The cords of death compassed me,
And the pains of Sheol gat hold upon me:
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD;
O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
Yea, our God is merciful.
6 The LORD preserveth the simple:
I was brought low, and he saved me.
7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
For the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death,

3. The cords of death compassed me: see on xviii. 4.

pains: *lit.* 'straitnesses': perhaps the plural is merely intensive, 'great distress.' A word corresponding to **cords** seems required here and in xviii. 4, but no successful attempt (Hupfeld, &c.) has so far been made to get such a word out of the M.T. As the verse stands death (=Sheol) is viewed under two distinct figures.

Sheol: see on lxxxvi. 13.

4. called I: Heb. 'I continued to call.'

the name of the LORD: 'Jehovah as known.'

my soul: probably here='me' with emphasis on the pronoun; see on cvii. 18, 26.

5 f. What the Psalmist found Jehovah to be.

5. See cxi. 4 and Exod. xxxiv. 6.

merciful: better, 'compassionate.'

6. simple: a great word in Proverbs: it denotes those who have a character opposed to craftiness, underhandedness, scheming; see Prov. xiv. 15, 18, xxii. 3, xxvii. 12.

7–19. *Vows and promises.*

7. Return: better, 'Turn,' which the verb primarily means: 'Turn away, O my soul, from the things which disturb and distract, to Him who is thy rest.' We have similar soliloquies in Pss. xlii, xliii, ciii.

rest: in Hebrew plural, denoting perfect rest; the 'plural of intensity.' The Hebrew word has reference, mainly, to those outward conditions in a man's lot which make for restfulness: such as prosperity, safety, &c.: see on lxxxiv. 4 (**Blessed**).

dealt bountifully: so xiii. 6, cxix. 17. The meaning of the phrase is 'to show kindness to.'

Mine eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
I will walk before the LORD 9
In the land of the living.
I believe, for I will speak: 10
I was greatly afflicted:
I said in my haste, 11
All men are a lie.
What shall I render unto the LORD 12
For all his benefits toward me?
I will take the cup of salvation, 13
And call upon the name of the LORD.
I will pay my vows unto the LORD, 14

In 8f. the thought is that of lvi. 13, the words being largely borrowed; cf. xxvii. 13. The use of the words of lvi. 13 accounts for the otherwise unaccountable change of persons here, Jehovah being addressed now in the second person.

8. thou hast delivered my soul . . . Mine eyes . . . my feet: the verb suits strictly the first object only: such 'anakoloutha' abound in Greek, Hebrew, and most languages.

9. In the land of the living: the sense is, 'in the land where living people are,' as opposed to Sheol, 'the land of shades': now that Jehovah has kept me in this world alive, I will walk so as to please Him.

10. The only translation which the M.T. can yield is this: 'I believed (in Jehovah) (even) when I had to say, I am much afflicted.' For the rendering of the LXX, Jero. see 2 Cor. iv. 13.

11. 11[a] is from xxxi. 22.

I (said): in Hebrew the pronoun is emphatic = 'as for me I.'

said: i. e. said inwardly, thought: so often in Hebrew. In Hebrew 'I say' has frequently the sense 'I have it in mind,' 'I purpose.'

in my haste: better, 'in my alarm,' as R.Vm.

All men are a lie: Heb. 'All men are lying,' 'break their word,' 'are treacherous.'

12. Render: 'How can I requite Jehovah, For all his kind acts towards me!'

13. cup of salvation: the figure is obtained from the pouring out of libations as a sacrifice to deity. The Psalmist will make an offering in acknowledgement of the deliverance accorded by God.

14. This verse occurs also as verse 18. Here it is omitted in

Yea, in the presence of all his people.
15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of his saints.
16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant:
I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid;
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.
18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD,
Yea, in the presence of all his people;
19 In the courts of the LORD'S house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

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the LXX, though the other ancient versions have it. The same words are naturally suggested by what precedes in both cases, and we are probably to keep the two identical verses where they are.

The sense of the verse is, 'What I have vowed to Jehovah in the event of my being rescued from so great danger I will now pay.'

Probably the vows embraced sacrifices and gifts of money for the temple. Vows of this kind are still often made, especially by Roman Catholics.

in the presence of all his people: publicly, not in private.

15. Precious, &c.: what is precious is rare, and therefore much thought of. Jehovah does not regard the death of His favoured ones as a thing of no importance, as trivial, as cheap: it is much thought of, and will not be allowed unless strong reasons call for it.

saints: Heb. 'favoured ones,' objects of the Divine *Khesed* or lovingkindness: see vol. i. pp. 360 f., note B.

16. I am thy servant: repeated by a copyist's mistake. For **thy servant** see on lxxxvi. 2.

the son of thine handmaid: see on lxxxvi. 16; it is simply a variation (for the sake of the poetry) of **servant**.

18 = 14.

19. This verse requires for its full sense the preceding verse, so that verse 18 cannot be dispensed with even if verse 14 can.

courts: the house itself could be entered by priests only.

Praise ye the LORD: must be transferred to the commencement of Ps. cxvii (with the LXX).

O praise the LORD, all ye nations; 117
Laud him, all ye peoples.
For his mercy is great toward us; 2
And the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever
Praise ye the LORD.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: 118

PSALM CXVII.

Theme. Universal summons to praise Jehovah.

I. *Title.* Praise-ye-Yah (Hallelujah): see on cxvi. 19.

II. *Contents.* Verse 1 summonses all nations to praise Jehovah; verse 2 gives the reason for this.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm belongs to the group Pss. cxiii–cxviii, which nearly all moderns rightly date in the late post-exilic period. Ewald, however, makes the present Psalm later than the rest.

1. Laud: the word in the M.T. occurs in the Aramaic and in late Hebrew in the sense 'to praise.'

2. mercy: Heb. 'lovingkindness.'

great toward us: read, 'higher than we' (deserve), changing the final consonant: the expression thus obtained occurs in ciii. 4, on which the present passage is based.

Praise ye the LORD: should be transferred to the beginning of Ps. cxviii as in the LXX.

PSALM CXVIII.

Theme. Song of thanksgiving for some recent national favour.

I. *Title.* **Praise ye the LORD:** Hallelujah: see on cxvii. 2.

II. *Contents.* This Psalm seems to have been composed to be sung antiphonally (see Pss. cxv, cxxxvi) during a procession made to the temple in celebration of some recent blessing received from Jehovah. The parts of the Psalm hang loosely together, as is commonly true of liturgical Psalms, but they may have been divided as follows:—

1–18. Sung during the procession: in verses 1–4 the odd and even lines by different sections of the choir: verse 19 sung outside the principal gate of the temple, and verse 20 by a party of Levites within: verses 21–25 sung as the procession passes through the gate, verse 26 being sung by the Levites who seemed at first (verse 20) to challenge the admission of the procession:

For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Let Israel now say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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verses 27–29 sung as the procession moved about in the temple area.

III. *Authorship and Date.* Though all commentators agree that the Psalm was called forth by some outstanding event there is great divergence of opinion as to what that event was, some holding that it was the reopening of the temple after the return from Babylon; others that it was its re-dedication after its desecration by the Syrians; while a large number from Hitzig to Duhm argue that it was some signal victory over the Syrian army. In the last case the procession would be a military and not a religious one. The dependence of this Psalm on other Psalms, its affinity with Ps. cxv and some late linguistic characteristics, prove the present Psalm to be late post-exilic.

Messianicity of the Psalm. A large number of Rabbinical authors and of the early Christian Fathers thought this Psalm primarily Messianic, and it has been so treated in modern times by Stier and others. Looking at the Psalm quite by itself one would have regarded it as called forth by the circumstances of the time, and as expressing the gratitude, joy, and faith of the writer and other pious Israelites. But it is cited in the N. T. in reference to our Lord: verse 22 is applied by the Master Himself to Himself[1], and the Apostle Peter applies the same words to Christ[2]. It is, however, a moot question whether, when O. T. passages are quoted with reference to N. T. persons or incidents, it is because the O. T. passages are supposed primarily to involve such reference. In many examples, at any rate, it is simply a case of analogy, the same principles being at work in the things compared; and it may, with the utmost accuracy, be said that what was taught in O. T. times is fulfilled and realized in N. T. history, even if the O. T. passages had originally no special reference to that with which, in the N. T., they are connected. See pp. 7 ff.

1–4. *General invitation to give thanks unto Jehovah.* A similar call to worship opens Psalms cvi f. and cxxxvi.

First all are summoned to give thanks: then the three classes named in cxv. 9–11 (see on).

1. for he is good, &c.: a common liturgical formula: see Jer. xxxiii. 11, and its beginning in Ps. lii. 9 (11).

2. Israel: LXX, 'house of Israel' as in cxv. 9. After **say** in 2[a],

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[1] Matt. xxi. 42 || Mark xii. 10 f. || Luke xx. 17.
[2] Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Let the house of Aaron now say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever. 3
Let them now that fear the LORD say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever. 4
Out of my distress I called upon the LORD: 5
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a large place.
The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: 6
What can man do unto me?
The LORD is on my side among them that help me: 7
Therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
It is better to trust in the LORD 8
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD 9
Than to put confidence in princes.

3^a, 4^a the LXX adds 'that He is good,' the same words which in verse 1 are correctly translated there 'for He is good.' W. F. Cobb (*Book of Psalms*, 1905) states the contrary of the fact here.

5-9. *Jehovah's help in the past an encouragement to faith.*

5. Out of my distress: better, 'in my straitness,' i. e. when I was hemmed in, perplexed, the preposition which usually means 'from' has in Hebrew and in Greek often the meaning 'in': see on cviii. 12.

the LORD: Heb. 'Jah' ('Yah') in both cases: for this word see on lxxxix. 8. Some Jewish authorities including the Massorah, and, among moderns, Jastrow, think the letters forming *Jah* (*Yah*) at the end of verse 5 belong really to the noun rendered **large place**: but such a noun is never met with.

in a large place: figure for being in a state of ease and comfort: the opposite idea is conveyed by the phrase 'in a strait, narrow place': see on cvii. 6.

6. See lvi. 9^b, 11. This verse is cited in Heb. xiii. 6, from the LXX, which differs slightly from the M. T.

7. see *my desire* upon = (I shall) look with glee upon: see on cxii. 8.

8 f. For the thought see lxii, and cf. xxxiii. 16 ff., cxvi. 11, cxlvi. 3. Perhaps the civil authorities—Persians or Syrians—had in some way betrayed the trust of the Jews.

8. trust: Heb. 'take refuge.'

10 All nations compassed me about:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
13 Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall:
But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and song;

10–14. *Jehovah's help against hostile heathen peoples.*

10. All nations: better, 'All the heathen.'

In the name of the LORD: i. e. by the help of Jehovah. For name see on lxxix. 9. The Hebrew preposition rendered 'in' often means 'through,' 'by the help of': see lvi. 4, lx. 12, and cviii. 13.

I will cut them off: Heb. 'Certainly I will,' &c. The verb is the usual one employed for 'to circumcise,' but it has in this verse a slightly different form (*Hiph.*). There is here probably a word-play similar to that in Phil. iii. 2 (*katatome* and *peritome*): 'These our foes taunt us with being circumcised: I will concise them.' Hengstenberg renders, 'I will circumcise them,' i. e. I will compel them to become Jews: but most of the surrounding nations practised circumcision. Duhm reads, 'I will bring them down.'

11. They compassed me about: repeated for the metre.

12. like bees: foes are compared to bees in Deut. i. 44; cf. Verg., *Georg.* iv. 83, 235 ff., Homer, *Il.* xvi. 259 f.

as the fire of thorns: a thorn fire flares up suddenly, and it as suddenly burns itself out. Yet the following words show that utter extinction is not meant. The LXX reads, 'They surrounded me as bees do a honeycomb, and they burst into flame as fire among thorns.' The Hebrew consonants implied in the LXX do not differ greatly from those in the M. T., and this reading is probably nearer what was first written than the M. T.

13. Thou didst thrust sore at me: we must read with LXX, Jero., Pesh., ''twas thrust,' &c. The second person must refer to the enemy, and is quite out of place here.

14. the LORD: Heb. *Jah* (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

song: we must read 'my song,' with the ancient versions. The change involves the addition of one very small letter (*yodh*).

And he is become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the 15
righteous:
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
The right hand of the LORD is exalted: 16
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
I shall not die, but live, 17
And declare the works of the LORD.
The LORD hath chastened me sore: 18
But he hath not given me over unto death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness: 19
I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto the LORD.

15–18. *Jehovah to be loudly praised for His goodness to the nation.*

15. rejoicing: Heb. 'ringing shouts of joy,' such as celebrate a victory, and the like.

tents: render, 'dwellings': this word has been adduced to show that the Psalm was made for the Feast of Tabernacles. But it is a different Hebrew word (*sukkoth*) that is used for the booth dwelt in during that festival. The Hebrew word in the present verse (*'Ohel*) means primarily a tent such as Beduins have for their movable home. Then it came to mean any dwelling, even a house, after the canvas tent had yielded to a more solid and permanent structure. So in cxxxii. 3 (see on); cf. Deut. xi. 45, 'David's *tent*,' i. e. his palace: see xv. 1 (of God's dwelling), xix. 5, &c.

doeth valiantly: better, 'accomplishes valiant things.'

16. is exalted: render, with LXX, Pesh., 'exalts me.' The 'me,' though not in the Hebrew, would be understood.

17. The danger of dying is now past.

18. chastened: 'Jehovah has instructed me through suffering.' The verb = 'to teach,' 'to discipline.'

19. The processional throng has now reached the temple area gate.

Open to me: the singular applies to each one in the procession.

gates of righteousness: the gates through which, as from Jehovah's home, victory comes: for this sense of 'righteousness' see on cxii. 3. Other explanations are (1) gates through which the righteous alone should go; cf. Ps. xxiv (Kautsch); (2) gates leading to the abode of the God of righteousness; cf. xx. 2; Jer. xxi. 23.

the LORD: Heb. *Jah* (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

20 This is the gate of the LORD;
The righteous shall enter into it.
21 I will give thanks unto thee, for thou hast answered me,
And art become my salvation.
22 The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.
23 This is the LORD'S doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
24 This is the day which the LORD hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

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20. The reply of the Levites within the gate.

gate: the main entrance: in verse 19 the plural **gates** refers to the three main gates. This gate is the one before which the procession stood.

21–25. *The procession enters singing words of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah who has signally blessed the nation.*

21. art become my salvation = hast delivered me; see Exod. xv. 2.

22. head of the corner: the expression occurs nowhere else in the O.T., but wherever elsewhere the word 'corner' is used of a part of the building it refers to the foundation, the corner stone at the basis of the building and not one at the top: so Isa. xxviii. 16; Jer. li. 26. What is here meant is that large stone in the lowest layer of stones which binds two rows at right angles.

We have perhaps in this verse a proverbial saying, but in any case the general sense is clear enough. The nation (or the individual!) once despised has come to great honour and glory. It was natural to apply the words to Jesus Christ (see before), for though He came to His own, His own received Him not. Yet He has become to myriads the 'chiefest among ten thousand' and the 'altogether lovely.'

23. This is the LORD'S doing: Heb. 'From' (=through) 'Jehovah has this come about.' We are indebted for it all to Him, not to our courage or skill: see Neh. vi. 16.

24. Jehovah has granted us the deliverance or the victory which we this day celebrate.

in it: i. e. on the day: not in Him (Jehovah), cf. xxxii. 11; nor is 'in it' the object of the rejoicing as Hitzig and Duhm hold. It was not the day they rejoiced in, but the event commemorated on the day. The Hebrew can, however, yield any one of the three meanings.

Save now, we beseech thee, O LORD:
O LORD, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.
Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD:
We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
The LORD is God, and he hath given us light:
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

25. Save now: the Hebrew is the original of the word 'hosanna,' which occurs in the N. T. (Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 9 f., &c.), though in N. T. Greek it had some such sense as 'Glory be to': see Dalman (*Words of the Lord Jesus*, pp. 220 ff.). Since Christ cited parts of verses 25 f. when He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and since in the Hebrew liturgy the seventh day of Tabernacles is called 'Hosanna Rabba' ('the great Hosanna'), it has been concluded that this Psalm was composed for Tabernacles. But we are not told that Christ made that entry into Jerusalem during Tabernacles: and the above name for the feast does not meet us until long after Bible times.

send now, &c.: the same words in Neh. i. 11.

26. Sung by the Levites, who at first (verse 20) seem to refuse admission to those forming the procession.

Blessed: an object of the Divine blessing: the Hebrew word rendered 'blessed' (i. e. 'happy') in lxxxiv. 4 (see on) is not the one used here.

in the name of the LORD: these words go with **blessed**: every one that enters the temple courts is blessed through Jehovah's name, i. e. through Jehovah Himself; see Num. vi. 27; 2 Sam. vi. 18.

27-29. *Sung by the choir at the head of the procession.*

27. given us light: in the metaphorical sense. The reference seems to be to Exod. xiii. 21: but cf. the priestly blessing, Num. vi. 25.

Bind the sacrifice: render, 'Begin the (festive) dance.' The Hebrew word rendered **sacrifice** has here its primary sense 'dance': 'bind' has its idiomatic sense in the phrase 'bind war[1]' (='begin war,' i. e. gather together the soldiers for fighting). Hence 'to bind a dance' is Hebrew idiom for 'to begin a dance.'

cords: *lit.* 'what is twisted': used of interwoven foliage in Ezek. xix. 11, &c. Ancient and modern authorities are fairly agreed that the word here denotes those bundles of twigs from palm, willow, and myrtle trees which the Jews, from time immemorial,

[1] See 1 Kings xx. 14, &c.

28 Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

119

ℵ ALEPH.

1 Blessed are they that are perfect in the way,

call 'lulabs[1].' These were brandished about the altar as they are in modern times about the bema during the festivals Tabernacles and Khanukah.

the horns of the altar: the narrow ledge surrounding the altar. H. R. S. Kennedy (*D.B.* i. p. 76) says, 'The view that these "horns" were originally projections to which the victims were bound has no better support than the corrupt passage Psalm cxviii. 27.'

This part of the verse may be thus rendered: 'Set a-going the (sacred) dance with your lulabs (in your hand), (even) up to the altar edge.'

28. See Exod. xv. 2. At the end of this verse the LXX repeats verse 21.

PSALM CXIX.

Theme. The preciousness of Jehovah's revelation.

I. *Title.* The M. T. has none, but in the LXX we find 'Hallelujah' or 'Praise-ye-Jah' (Yah).

II. *Contents.* This Psalm of 176 verses consists of a string of short sayings resembling proverbs, dealing with the value of God's word and the happiness which comes from its study and observance. According to the Massorah the law or the revealed will of Jehovah is referred to under some name or other in every verse except the 122nd. The Psalm is to a large extent an anthology of sayings current at the time, though the individual note has been introduced throughout, and many of the proverbs incorporated have no doubt been edited so as to make them reflect their age. There is but little logical connexion. That which holds the verses together is the external bond of the letters of the alphabet, each letter having eight verses given it, the key-letter beginning each of the eight verses. There is a good deal of repetition, and many of the sentences are jejune and commonplace—all which is what might be expected in a scheme which requires eight different statements about the same theme all commencing with the same letter.

[1] Dalman (*Aramaic, &c. Lexicon*) and some others point it 'lolabs'; see 2 Macc. x. 7.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The following considerations argue for the Psalm in its present form a late date.

(1) The alphabetic arrangement.

(2) The tone of externalism which characterizes the piety enforced. The Exile in Babylon was traced by the nation in general to the neglect of religious duties: hence in post-exilic Biblical literature these duties are emphasized very much.

(3) The prominence given to the Divine word accords well with the period characterized by Scribism, a system in which more attention was given to the preservation, interpretation, and studying of the law than to its observance. The zeal for the law of God which characterized the Maccabean revolt might well have inspired the compilation and, in part, the composition of the present Psalm. There are many peculiarities of style (see Hitzig) which require a late date. Earlier dates have been defended by Hengstenberg (about B. C. 560), Kirkpatrick (time of Nehemiah), Baethgen, and Cheyne, both the latter deciding for the early Greek period (say B. C. 250).

IV. *Structure and external form.* This Psalm is made up of twenty-two strophes or stanzas, corresponding to the number of letters (i. e. consonants[1]) in the Hebrew alphabet. Each strophe has eight lines, each of these beginning with that Hebrew consonant after which (in English, &c.) the strophe is named. No attempt to reproduce this acrostic arrangement in other languages (e. g. Ewald, &c. in German) has approached success.

Duhm, Baethgen (3) and Cheyne (2) have adopted the following explanation of the structure of the Psalm, put forth by Dr. D. H. Müller of Vienna in his recent work on the Strophe-system of the Psalms—it is the explanation assumed by the present writer in his notes: Ps. cxix is but an expansion of Ps. xix. 8–11 (originally an independent Psalm). In the latter, eight separate words are employed for God's word, His revealed thought. The compiler and in part author of Ps. cxix, wishing to give great prominence to the Divine word, put together twenty-two stanzas, in each one of which every one of the terms designating that word in Ps. xix. 8–11 is used. Unimportant changes in the text have to be made in order to apply the principle rigidly, but with so

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[1] Vowel signs proper were not introduced into Hebrew, Syriac, or Arabic for some centuries after the Christian era set in. Yet good old Doctor Gill, even in the eighteenth century, held it to have been a heresy very dangerous to faith to say that vowel letters are of later origin than the consonants. See *A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel points and Accents*, 8vo, i–xliii, 1–282, 1767.

much repetition of similar words some confusion was almost inevitable. See the notes.

The following is a list of the eight terms referred to, followed immediately by the English word used for it in these notes. In each case it is the Divine word, the utterance of the Divine thought, that is meant, and the ordinary differences of meaning must not be unduly pressed: they express the same thing under various aspects.

1. *Tōrāh* (*lit.* 'instruction'): 'law'; see on lxxviii. 1.

2. *Eduth* (only plural in this Psalm): 'admonitions.' The word means literally a command given in the presence of witnesses. The Massorites, by the difference of one vowel, erroneously make two words of this one.

3. *Dābār:* 'word': what is spoken as such = Greek *epos*, though the LXX has sometimes *logos* for it.

4. *Piqqūd:* 'precept': a synonym for command, found nowhere outside the Psalter.

5. *Khōq:* 'statute': *lit.* 'what is engraved': so 'a law carved in stone or on metal': then simply 'statute.'

6. *Mitzwāh:* 'command,' see on lxxxi. 4.

7. *Mishpāṭ:* 'ordinance' (i. e. injunction) has the primary sense of a judicial decision in a particular case. Then since precedent becomes (customary) law, the word came to have the meaning it bears in this Psalm—'ordinance,' 'injunction.'

8. *Imrāh:* 'saying': denotes strictly 'word' with regard to its meaning; so = Greek *logos*. The LXX has for it the diminutive *logion*. It has often the sense 'promise.' But it is probably in this Psalm a mere variant of *dabar*.

It is not so much the written as the orally handed down word of God which forms the theme of this long Psalm. Reading and writing have never played a large part in the East, memory and tradition taking their place. There are unwritten Bibles in India, Africa, Arabia, &c.

The Tenses in this Psalm. The two forms of the Hebrew verb usually but inaccurately called *Tenses* denote strictly action completed (perf.) and not completed (impf.)[1]. The former is used throughout this Psalm in the sense of what in Hebrew Grammar is called the 'perfect of experience,' embracing what *has been* and *is*. The present tense in English best expresses this, and is adopted in these notes.

[1] It was Ewald who first pointed out clearly the force of the two principal forms of the Semitic verb, wrongly called tenses: see *Heinrich Ewald: a Centenary Appreciation* (by the present writer), pp. 81 ff.

Who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, 2
That seek him with the whole heart.
Yea, they do no unrighteousness; 3
They walk in his ways.
Thou hast commanded *us* thy precepts, 4
That we should observe them diligently.
Oh that my ways were established 5
To observe thy statutes!
Then shall I not be ashamed, 6

ALEPH.

1-8. *Desire for uprightness through obedience.*

1. Blessed: i. e. happy. See on lxxxiv. 4, and cf. note on cxviii. 26.

perfect in the way: i. e. whose conduct is perfect; as close to the law as a sincere earnest man can make it.

Who walk, &c.: who keep within the limits of the law: to transgress is to go outside, beyond (*trans*) it.

2. Blessed: 'happy.'

testimonies: render, 'admonitions.'

That seek him: see verse 10, and Deut. iv. 29. In the latter passage seeking Jehovah is the opposite of worshipping idols; that is the sense of the expression here and in verse 10.

heart in the psychology of the Hebrews includes what in Kantian phraseology is called mind, i. e. feeling, intellect, and will. In lxxiii. 26 heart and flesh embrace the whole man. Dillmann and Driver say that in the O. T. the heart is the organ of the intellect alone; see Jer. v. 21; Hos. vii. 11. But in the present verse and in verse 10 the wider sense is clearly intended.

3. his ways: read, 'His words': cf. verse 1. To walk in Jehovah's word = to walk in His law. 'Ways' occurs in verse 5; 'words' occurs in no other part of the strophe. The Hebrew is much the same for 'ways' and 'words.'

4. hast commanded: better, 'commandest'; see note on *The Tenses in this Psalm*, p. 254.

5. ways = conduct.

6. Then: referring back to verse 5.

ashamed: the verb has often the sense of 'to be foiled,' 'to have one's efforts frustrated': 'I shall not fail in my efforts to obey if thou establish,' &c.

When I have respect unto all thy commandments.
7 I will give thanks unto thee with uprightness of heart,
When I learn thy righteous judgements.
8 I will observe thy statutes:
O forsake me not utterly.

ב BETH.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
10 With my whole heart have I sought thee:
O let me not wander from thy commandments.
11 Thy word have I laid up in mine heart,
That I might not sin against thee.

When I have respect to = 'when I look upon, with a view to keeping.'

7. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

8. thy statutes: read, 'saying' (*imrah*). 'Statutes' has already occurred (see verse 5).

BETH.

9-16. *Longing to know and keep the law.*

9. Render: 'Whereby can a young man keep his course of life pure, So that he may guard it' (or 'himself') 'according to thy word?'

The second portion of the verse goes with the first as part of the question; see 4^a, 5^a.

The answer is obvious from the context; see especially verses 5, 10.

The object after 'guard' is 'his course of life' in 9^a, not himself (as Delitzsch, &c.). See Joshua vi. 18 for a similar use of the same verb.

word: read 'words' with the ancient versions and many Hebrew MSS.

10. heart: see on verse 2.

have I sought: render, 'do I seek'; see on verse 4.

let me not wander, &c.: some, following Aquila's rendering, think that sins of ignorance are meant: but the Hebrew = 'let me not go wrong,' 'go astray,' whether or not the cause be ignorance. Sins of ignorance are referred to in Lev. iv. 2, 13; Num. xv. 22.

11. have I laid: better, 'do I hide': see on verse 4. The verb is used of hiding away precious things, gold and the like.

Blessed art thou, O LORD: 12
Teach me thy statutes.
With my lips have I declared 13
All the judgements of thy mouth.
I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, 14
As much as in all riches.
I will meditate in thy precepts, 15
And have respect unto thy ways.
I will delight myself in thy statutes: 16
I will not forget thy word.

ג GIMEL.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live; 17
So will I observe thy word.
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold 18

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12. Blessed = 'Praised be,' &c. The Hebrew word (*baruch*) is not that in verses 1 f.; see on lxxxiv. 4. It is nearly always optative in the form found here (pass. part.).

13. have I declared: 'do I recount'; see on verse 4.

judgements: 'ordinances.'

14. I have rejoiced: 'I rejoice': see on verse 4.

way: the course of life enforced in

testimonies: 'admonitions.'

As much as, &c.: changing one letter we get the far likelier rendering: 'More than in' (**all riches**), so Pesh. It was a small thing to say that he had as much joy in God's word as in riches.

in all riches: render, '(More than) under conditions of wealth of every kind.' So essentially LXX, Jero. The Hebrew preposition here translated 'in' is different from that in 14^a, and can hardly, in good Hebrew, be dependent on the verb 'rejoice.'

16. thy statutes: read, 'thy law': 'statutes' is found in verse 12: 'law' is not found elsewhere in this strophe.

GIMEL.

17–24. *Comfort in distress from God's word.*

17. Render: 'Grant to thy servant that I may live, So that I may keep thy words.'

Deal bountifully: see on cxvi. 7, where the same verb occurs. The above is the proper translation, 'grant,' &c.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

18. Open: Heb. and LXX 'uncover,' 'unveil.' Take from my

Wondrous things out of thy law.
19 I am a sojourner in the earth:
Hide not thy commandments from me.
20 My soul breaketh for the longing
That it hath unto thy judgements at all times.
21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed,
Which do wander from thy commandments.
22 Take away from me reproach and contempt;

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eyes what prevents them from seeing the extraordinary things which thy law contains.

Wondrous things: see on lxxviii. 4.

19. 19[a] is from xxxix. 12 (see on). The thought in the original passage is, 'Since I am but a stranger, a passing guest, let me have some joy before I go hence.'

sojourner: see on xciv. 6; the Hebrew word (*ger*) denotes a foreigner who has become a permanent resident in Palestine and has acquired substantial citizen rights. *Toshab* means a temporary resident only. The latter word is translated in the R. V. 'sojourner' in xxxix. 12, 'stranger' being the English word for *ger*. 'Naturalized citizens' might be used for *ger*, and 'sojourner' for *toshab*, though not with strict accuracy. In the present verse the *ger* (sojourner) is assumed to be under an obligation to keep the laws of His adopted country; hence the Psalmist, a *ger* in the earth, prays that he may have revealed to him the law of that God in whose land he dwells, so that he may keep it. In xxxix. 12 the reasoning is different: 'Spare me, for though a *ger* I have, as such, some claims upon thy consideration' (cf. Lev. xxv. 23): see Bertholet, *Die Stellung*, &c. 156 ff., and Driver on Deut. pp. 165 f.

20 gives the ground for the prayer in verse 19; render, 'My soul (=I myself) meditates longingly concerning thy ordinances all the time.'

breaketh: render, with Targ., 'meditates,' though the sense of the verb is variously given by the other versions and it is very uncertain. The same word in a different form (*hiph*) occurs in Lam. iii. 16.

21. Render: 'I have rebuked the arrogant; Cursed are they that wander from thy commandments.'

Thou hast rebuked: so the ancient versions, but the sense and the connexion (cf. verse 20 'my soul'='I myself') require the reading 'I have rebuked.'

cursed: wrongly joined by the Massorites, the Targ., and the E.VV. with the preceding.

22. If the rendering **thou hast rebuked** be retained in

For I have kept thy testimonies.
Princes also sat and talked against me: 23
But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also are my delight 24
And my counsellors.

ד DALETH.

My soul cleaveth unto the dust: 25
Quicken thou me according to thy word.
I declared my ways, and thou answeredst me: 26
Teach me thy statutes.
Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: 27

---

verse 21, then verse 22 means; 'Let me not be under the reproach involved in thy rebuke.'

Take away: the same verb as in verse 18, 'uncover.' But by changing one vowel (*gōl* for *gal*) we get 'roll away' (so xxxvii. 5, &c.). Reproach is conceived as a burden which Jehovah is entreated to roll away.

23. Render: 'Though (heathen) princes sat and talked together' (='schemed') 'against me, Thy servant' (i. e. 'I') 'meditated in thy statutes.'

24. Thy testimonies: 'thy admonitions.'

DALETH.

25–32. *Prayer to be taught the Divine law, for it sustains and comforts.*

25. My soul=I myself.

cleaveth unto the dust: a figure denoting intense grief; so xliv. 25. He has not the strength or heart to stand upright.

Quicken: see on lxxx. 18.

according to thy word: read, 'by means of thy word'; two very similar Hebrew letters (*b* and *k*) are confounded here, as frequently; God's word revives: see verses 50, 93.

26. I declared: better, 'I recounted.'

my ways: 'my life experiences.' 'Thou answeredst my prayers in regard to these; So answer me now when I pray to be taught thy statutes.' Answered prayer is with God a reason why other prayers should be answered.

27. The petition of 26^{b} is repeated in different words with perhaps a word-play on **way**: 'I have recounted my ways; tell me now thine—the way of thy precepts.'

So shall I meditate of thy wondrous works.
28 My soul melteth for heaviness:
Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
29 Remove from me the way of falsehood:
And grant me thy law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness:
Thy judgements have I set *before me*.
31 I cleave unto thy testimonies:
O LORD, put me not to shame.
32 I will run the way of thy commandments,
When thou shalt enlarge my heart.

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thy wondrous works: the same noun in Hebrew that is rendered in verse 18 **wondrous things** (see on).

28. melteth: 'I (my soul) am dissolving in tears.' See Job xvi. 20.

heaviness: Heb. 'grief,' 'sorrow.'

according unto thy word: read here as in verse 25, 'by means of thy word': so LXX here. See on verse 25.

thy word: read, 'precepts,' and so avoid the repetition of 'word' and secure one occurrence of 'precepts' (*piqqudim*) in this strophe.

29. way of falsehood: 'idolatry conceived as harlotry' is what is meant: a false way = 'religious practices involving unfaithfulness to Jehovah'; so verses 104, 128. Perhaps there is a reference to Jewish apostates of the writer's day.

30. way of faithfulness: the opposite of the way of falsehood (verse 29): 'I have chosen to be faithful to thee.'

have I set: read, with the change of one consonant, 'I have desired': cf. the parallel words 'I have chosen.'

before me: not in the Hebrew, and a mere addition to make sense of the M. T. **have I set.**

31. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

put me not to shame: by letting me act inconsistently with thy law which I profess to follow.

32. Render: 'I run in the way of' (= enjoined by) 'thy commandments, Because thou dost give my heart free scope.'

enlarge: see on cvii. 6, and the rendering above. But 1 Kings v. 9 and the context make it likely that the verb here means 'to make wise,' here in God's law.

heart: see on verse 2.

ה HE.

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; 33
And I shall keep it unto the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; 34
Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; 35
For therein do I delight.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, 36
And not to covetousness.
Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, 37
And quicken me in thy ways.
Confirm thy word unto thy servant, 38
Which *belongeth* unto the fear of thee.

HE.

33-40. *God's word promotes unselfishness and Godly fear.*

33. And I shall keep, &c.: render, 'So that I may attend to it as a reward.' The result of Jehovah's teaching is obedience, and this obedience is a reward from God.

unto the end: the one word in Hebrew so rendered is in xix. 11 rightly translated 'reward.' By itself it never means 'unto the end,' unless that is the case here and in verse 112 (see on). The keeping of the law is a reward in itself. In xix. 11 the reward is something which follows obedience: here it is obedience itself.

34. and I shall keep, &c.: better, 'so that I may keep thy law and observe it,' &c.

heart: see on verse 2.

36. testimonies: 'admonitions.'

covetousness: *lit.* 'gain': then 'love of gain,' as here.

37. beholding: the Hebrew means probably 'looking complacently (or 'with pleasure') upon,' though the Hebrew for this has usually a preposition (*b*) which is here lacking; see on cxii. 8.

vanity: *lit.* 'nothingness': here idols are meant. So xxiv. 4; Jer. xviii. 15, &c. 'Prevent me from gazing approvingly upon the idols around.'

38. word: better, 'saying': the Hebrew word often = 'promise.' So here: see below.

servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

Which *belongeth,* &c.: render, 'Which belongs to those who

39 Turn away my reproach whereof I am afraid;
For thy judgements are good.
40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts:
Quicken me in thy righteousness.

ו VAU.

41 Let thy mercies also come unto me, O LORD,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
42 So shall I have an answer for him that reproacheth me;
For I trust in thy word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
For I have hoped in thy judgements.
44 So shall I observe thy law continually

---

fear thee.' The abstract noun **fear** has often the concrete sense as here. The word 'belongeth' is implied in the Hebrew, and should not therefore be italicized.

39. my reproach: the obloquy and scorn heaped upon Him for adhering to the true religion; see verses 23 f., 42.

judgements: better, 'ordinances,' not as some explain here, 'judicial sentences.' The Hebrew word is throughout this Psalm one of the eight synonyms for Jehovah's revealed will.

40. Quicken me: see on lxxx. 18.

in thy righteousness: render, 'by thy righteousness,' i. e. by imparting to me the rightness of life which thy law makes obligatory. The whole drift of the Psalm shows that this must be the sense here. Revival comes through the word, through conformity to the Divine law: see verses 25, 50, 93.

WAW (R. V. VAU).

41–48. *Prayer for strengthening of faith.*

41. word: Heb. *imrah*: 'saying.'

42. him that reproacheth me: i. e. with believing in a false God. Jehovah's deliverance would be the Psalmist's vindication. If the reproachers are faithless Israelites, that deliverance would be a vindication of the claims of the orthodox Jewish party.

43. The negative side of what is said in verses 41 f. If Jehovah does not endorse the Psalmist's doctrine by some manifestations of power and favour, the word of truth is virtually snatched out of his mouth.

Verses 44–46 are made up of sentences which express either purpose ('telic') or result ('ecbatic'), probably the latter.

For ever and ever.
And I will walk at liberty; 45
For I have sought thy precepts.
I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, 46
And will not be ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments, 47
Which I have loved.
I will lift up my hands also unto thy commandments, 48
which I have loved;
And I will meditate in thy statutes.

ז ZAIN.

Remember the word unto thy servant, 49
Because thou hast made me to hope.

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44. For ever and ever: i. e. for the rest of his life: nothing beyond death is contemplated.

45. at liberty: Heb. 'in a broad place,' free from all restraint; see on cvii. 6.

I have sought: better, 'I seek': see on verse 4. 'Thou art the only God whose commands I attend to.'

46. kings: kings in general are probably meant, and not the Persian or Syrian kings. We have notable examples of this fearless attitude in Daniel, in the Maccabean heroes, in Luther, and in John Knox: see Matt. x. 18; Acts xxvi. 1 f., and see on cxxxviii. 1.

47. I have loved: better, 'I love': see on verse 4. The LXX add to the verb the adverb 'much.'

48. I will lift up my hands: this is an attitude of prayer: see xxviii. 2, lxiii. 5, cxxxiv. 2, cxli. 2. We have here, according to Duhm, the first hint at that worship of the written word, the law, which in later Judaism became common. Probably, however, nothing more is meant than the lifting up of the heart; see Lam. iii. 41. Perhaps for **hands** we should read 'heart': the two Hebrew words are easily confounded.

commandments: this word occurs in verse 47: read, 'statutes.'

ZAIN.

49-56. *The comfort and joy of God's word.*

49. the word: read (with the versions), 'thy word,' i.e. 'thy promise.'

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

Because: the A. V. and R.Vm. 'Upon which' has the support

50 This is my comfort in my affliction:
For thy word hath quickened me.
51 The proud have had me greatly in derision:
Yet have I not swerved from thy law.
52 I have remembered thy judgements of old, O LORD,
And have comforted myself.
53 Hot indignation hath taken hold upon me,
Because of the wicked that forsake thy law.
54 Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night,
And have observed thy law.

---

of the LXX, Pesh., Jero.: but the R.V. correctly renders the Hebrew, as do Aq., Sym., &c. The Hebrew word has the same sense in Deut. xxix. 24, &c.

hast made: better, 'makest': see on verse 4. The thought is, 'Thou causest us by thy promise to have hope in thee; forget not that promise lest we be disappointed.'

50. Render: 'This is my consolation in my affliction—That thy word revives me.'

51. thy law: read, 'thy commandments.' 'Law' occurs thrice in this strophe in the M. T.: 'commandments' and 'admonitions' not at all: they must be restored.

52. I have remembered: better, 'I remember.'

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

of old: referring to the ordinances: they belong to the long ago.

have comforted: better, 'comfort.'

53. the wicked that forsake, &c.: the Jews who have turned their backs upon the faith of their fathers in order to win the smiles and escape the smitings of our Syrian (or Persian, or Greek?) oppressors.

54. my songs: the theme of my songs.

house of my pilgrimage: the place where I am a *ger*; see on verse 19. In the latter verse he wishes to know God's law, because he is a citizen—a *ger*—in God's land. Now he says he sings about that law, so great is his joy in it.

55. remembered: better, 'I think about,' the primary sense of the verb.

name = 'revealed character.'

thy law: read, 'thy admonitions': see on verse 51.

This I have had, 56
Because I kept thy precepts.

ח CHETH.

The LORD is my portion: 57
I have said that I would observe thy words.
I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: 58
Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
I thought on my ways, 59
And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
I made haste, and delayed not, 60
To observe thy commandments.
The cords of the wicked have wrapped me round; 61
But I have not forgotten thy law.

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56. This, &c. : read (with LXX, Pesh., &c.), 'This has been my consolation'—restoring a word which has apparently dropped out.

Because: render, 'That,' &c., as in verse 50.

KHETH.

57-64. *The Psalmist's fidelity to Jehovah's law even when he is persecuted.*

57. Render: 'My portion, O Jehovah, I have (inwardly) said, is, to keep thy words.'

The R.V., though supported by the Hebrew accents, makes a wrong division of the words in the verse. The attachment professed throughout this Psalm is to Jehovah's law, and not to Jehovah Himself. It should be remembered that the so-called Hebrew accents (not older than about A. D. 700), besides usually indicating the place of the tone, are also punctuation marks.

I have said: i. e. inwardly, 'I say to myself.'

58. Be merciful: better, 'Be gracious to': so M.T., LXX, Jero., Targ. We should, however, probably read with Pesh. 'revive me.'

59-61. The past tenses of the R.V. should be all changed to the present: 'I think' . . . 'turn' . . . 'make haste,' &c.: see p. 254 (*The Tenses*, &c.).

59 f. When he gave heed to his manner of life he saw its defects, and took pleasure in subjecting it to the norm of the Divine law.

61. Even when entrapped by the wicked, i. e. when treacherously betrayed to the Syrian (or Persian, or Greek?) rulers, he held fast to his religion.

62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee
Because of thy righteous judgements.
63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
And of them that observe thy precepts.
64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy:
Teach me thy statutes.

ט TETH.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O LORD, according unto thy word.
66 Teach me good judgement and knowledge;
For I have believed in thy commandments.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray;
But now I observe thy word.

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62. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

63. companion: Heb. 'a member of the same party,' 'club,' &c. In post-Biblical Hebrew the word came to mean 'a member of the same society, club, &c., whether literary, philanthropic, or religious.' It was also in the Jewish schools a title of distinction for a student: cf. the use of 'fellow' in the Welsh and other universities.

TETH.

65–72. *Jehovah's dealings are all full of love.*

65. hast dealt well with: better, 'showest kindness to,' see on cxvi. 7.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

thy word: i. e. 'thy promise,' as in verse 49.

66[a] means 'Teach me to have a keen sense of the requirements of thy law, and to be able to realize them in my conduct.'

66. good judgement: *lit.* 'goodness of discernment,' i. e. power of accurately discerning (what thy law involves).

knowledge: the cognate Hebrew verb ('to know') has often befor other verbs the force of the French *savoir*, i. e. 'to be able' (to speak, practise, &c.). Here the noun denotes skill in applying the Divine law to the life of every day.

67. The idea in 67[a] is, 'My sin brought on my suffering.' The belief in the close connexion between sin and suffering was very prevalent among the Jews; cf. the teaching of Job's three friends, and see John ix. 1 ff. There is, of course, a very real sense in which suffering leads to amendment of life, but that is not the thought here.

Thou art good, and doest good; 68
Teach me thy statutes.
The proud have forged a lie against me: 69
With my whole heart will I keep thy precepts.
Their heart is as fat as grease; 70
But I delight in thy law.
It is good for me that I have been afflicted; 71
That I might learn thy statutes.
The law of thy mouth is better unto me 72
Than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD.

Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: 73

68. good = 'kind': so often in the O. T.
doest good = 'actest in a kind way.'
statutes: read, 'ordinances,' which otherwise would not occur in this strophe.

69. have forged, &c.: render: 'cover me over with falsehoods,' i. e. 'they (the proud) give me a character that is not my own.' The Hebrew verb used here means 'to besmear,' 'to cover over'—so the Aramaic and Assyrian cognates: but it never has the sense 'to forge': see Peake on Job xiii. 4, in this series of Commentaries.

70. Render: 'Their heart is gross, as with fat,' &c.: see on lxxiii. 7. The stunting of the moral sense is often connected with physical depletion: see xvii. 10, &c. Cf. the principle involved in asceticism.
law: read, 'admonitions.'

71. The sense is; 'The affliction brought on by my sin turned out for my good, for thereby learned I thy law.' Many interpret verse 67 in a similar way (see note on).
I have been afflicted: better perhaps, 'I am afflicted': see on verse 76.

72. thousands of gold and silver: i. e. 'thousands of gold and silver pieces,' or 'coins.' The Hebrew words for gold and silver are constantly used by themselves, for the gold and silver shekel (value about £2 1s. and 2s. 9d. respectively). Perhaps here we are to understand gold and silver pieces in general.

JOD.

73-80. *Prayer for instruction and deliverance.*

73. have made, &c.: the verbs here seem to be past in sense.
73[a] is from Job x. 8, cf. also Deut. xxxii. 8; Job xxxi. 15.

Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74 They that fear thee shall see me and be glad;
Because I have hoped in thy word.

75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgements are righteous,
And that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray thee, thy lovingkindness be for my comfort,
According to thy word unto thy servant.

77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live:
For thy law is my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they have overthrown me wrongfully:

'Since thou hast made and constituted me as I am, complete thy work by giving me understanding of thy law.'

74. Render: 'May those who fear thee, see me and be glad,' &c., i. e. 'When they see me may they have cause for joy in the faith which I have in thy law.' The verse stands in close connexion with the preceding 'give me understanding,' &c.

75. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

righteous: i. e. 'faithful,' as in Isa. xl ff. The Hebrew word is a noun. In Semitic, nouns are constantly employed instead of adjectives.

hast afflicted: better perhaps, 'afflictest,' see on verses 59–61, and on verses 67 and 71.

76. The sense is: 'Show me thy lovingkindness so that I may (thereby) be comforted.' This verse suggests present affliction: perhaps therefore in verses 71 and 75 we should translate **I have been afflicted,** &c. by the present tense: see on these verses.

77. The ground of the prayer in 77[a] is the writer's delight in God's law. The claim to personal integrity pervades this Psalm, as also the speeches of Job: but see on verse 67.

tender mercies: better, 'compassions': the same word occurs in verse 156.

78. be ashamed: 'be foiled,' 'frustrated,' a common meaning of the verb.

they have overthrown me wrongfully = 'they have wronged me (at law) by making false accusations against me.' The verb rendered 'overthrow' is used in Job viii. 5 and xxxiv. 12 of 'perverting' (lit. 'twisting') justice.

wrongfully: Heb. 'with falsehood' (adverbial accusative),

But I will meditate in thy precepts.
Let those that fear thee turn unto me, 79
And they shall know thy testimonies.
Let my heart be perfect in thy statutes; 80
That I be not ashamed.

כ CAPH.

My soul fainteth for thy salvation: 81
But I hope in thy word.
Mine eyes fail for thy word, 82
While I say, When wilt thou comfort me?
For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; 83
Yet do I not forget thy statutes.
How many are the days of thy servant? 84

'with false accusations.' Hupfeld and Wellhausen explain 'without cause,' making it equivalent to the word *Khinam*: see on verses 86, 118.

79. And they shall know: better, 'And those who know,' &c. So M. T. (*qr.*) and the ancient versions, including the Targ. The *keth.* may mean 'That they may know,' but Kirkpatrick errs in adducing the Targ. for this rendering; see above.

CAPH.

81-89. *The Psalmist is in great distress, but he holds fast to Jehovah's commandments and seeks protection.*

81. fainteth: *lit.* 'comes to an end': cf. the English 'I am dying for.'

82. fail: the same verb is translated **fainteth** in verse 81 (see on). The words **soul** (81) and **eyes** have here the force of strong personal pronouns, as often in Semitic: '*I* faint for thy salvation' (81), 'thy word' (82). In both verses the thought is of the exhaustion due to 'hope deferred.'

83. a bottle in the smoke: the Psalmist complains that he is shrivelled up by suffering as a skin bottle is in an Eastern house under the action of smoke. Eastern houses rarely have chimneys, so that the smoke of the charcoal and fire affects the articles in the house very much. Most of the ancient versions have 'like a wineskin in hoar-frost.'

84. How many: here, as often, the expression means 'How few,' 'few at the most': 'Seeing that my life is at best but short, let justice be done me soon, or it may be too late.'

For **the days of thy servant** Baethgen reads 'my days'

When wilt thou execute judgement on them that persecute me?

85 The proud have digged pits for me,
Who are not after thy law.
86 All thy commandments are faithful:
They persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.
87 They had almost consumed me upon earth;
But I forsook not thy precepts.

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to suit the metre: but this does not help or even suit the metre, and no change is necessary.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

execute judgement: we must understand 'judgement' in the sense which the word has in this Psalm, viz. 'ordinance,' 'injunction.' So 'to execute judgement' = 'to carry out the principles of justice ordained by Jehovah, and forming an integral part of the law.'

85. Render: 'The arrogant dig pits for me (viz. those), Who do not conform to thy law.' The LXX for **pits** has 'frivolous tales,' reading *sikhot* for *shikhot* (*s* for *sh*); in unpointed Hebrew the words would be written the same. For **digged** the LXX has 'related.' This version renders the verse, 'Transgressors have told me frivolous tales, but not as thy law, O Lord.'

Who are not, &c.: the relative can refer to the proud (haughty) only, and not, as in Sym., Jero., Targ., to the **pits** ('which are,' &c.). Nor does the relative (the Hebrew = 'who' or 'which') stand for the whole statement in 85ª as in LXX, Pesh. Baethgen misrepresents the evidence of the versions here, as Kirkpatrick does on verse 79. It would be a paltry truism and off the line of thought to say that digging pits for good people is against the Divine law.

86. faithful: Heb. 'faithfulness' (a noun); see on verse 75 ('righteous').

wrongfully: same sense as in verse 78 (see on): they utter falsehoods in order to incriminate me—their only way of attaining that end.

87. consumed: better, 'made an end of.' 'They had come near to killing me.' It is the transitive (*Pi*) form of the verb found in verses 81 (**fainteth**) and 82 (**fail**).

upon earth: where he lives, in contrast with Sheol whither the shades of the departed go. For other explanations see the larger commentaries. Duhm, &c. reject the clause.

Note in 87ᵇ the Psalmist's consciousness of integrity; see on verse 77.

Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; 88
So shall I observe the testimony of thy mouth.

ל LAMED.

For ever, O LORD, 89
Thy word is settled in heaven.
Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: 90
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
They abide this day according to thine ordinances; 91
For all things are thy servants.
Unless thy law had been my delight, 92
I should then have perished in mine affliction.
I will never forget thy precepts; 93
For with them thou hast quickened me.

LAMEDH.

89-96. *Jehovah's word abides: He Himself is faithful.*

89. Render: 'For ever, O Jehovah, is thy word: It is firmly fixed in the heavens.' The Hebrew accents require the following rendering: 'For ever is Jehovah: thy word is,' &c., but the sudden transition from the third person ('Jehovah') to the second (**thy word**) is strange and improbable. The translation proposed above has the support of Pesh. and of most moderns.

in heaven: beyond the reach of earthly changes; see on lxxxix. 2; cf. lxxii. 5.

90 f. The constancy of God's work in nature, a pledge of His unchanging faithfulness.

90. Thy faithfulness: read, 'thy saying' (*imrah*).

91. Render: 'The day and the night abide according to thy ordinances; For all things (in the material universe) are thy servants.' The (**this**) **day** occurring in the M. T. by itself is suspicious: on the basis of lxxiv. 16 Ewald suggested that 'and the night' has fallen out. His rendering is, 'The day and the night wait on thy judgements'; but the verb **abide** must have here the same sense as in verse 90: it means literally 'to stand.'

all things: Heb. 'the whole,' 'the totality of things.' If the M. T. is kept, render 'With reference to thy ordinances they abide this day,' &c. So R.Vm.

92 f. He is indebted to the law for victory and revival.

93b. Cf. l. 6.

94 I am thine, save me;
For I have sought thy precepts.
95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me;
But I will consider thy testimonies.
96 I have seen an end of all perfection;
But thy commandment is exceeding broad.

ם MEM.

97 Oh how love I thy law!
It is my meditation all the day.
98 Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies;
For they are ever with me.
99 I have more understanding than all my teachers;

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94. save: *lit.* 'put me in a wide place'=set me at large, give me a wide berth; see on cvii. 6. The root of the verb here used is that in 'Jesus' and 'Joshua' (=*lit.* 'one that sets at large').

sought: Heb. 'inquired into,' 'studied'; see on cv. 4.

precepts: read, 'statutes.'

95. have waited: in a hostile sense (so lvi. 7).

96. perfection: read (with trivial changes in the Hebrew) the word found in Job xi. 7 and xxvi. 11, meaning 'the farthest limit,' 'the remotest point in space.' See Budde and Marshall on these Job passages. The sense of this verse seems to be: The horizon bounds my vision of space: my farthest visible point is bounded: but God's commandment is **exceeding broad,** i. e. without end. In Job xi. 9 the same adjective is applied to the Almighty.

MEM.

97–104. *God's word the source of the highest wisdom.*

98. Render: 'Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, For it is my possession for ever.' The singular 'commandment' seems required by the grammar, though not necessarily. The A. V. and R.Vm. 'thou through,' &c. follow the LXX, Jero.

99. Duhm laughs at the thought that such a fool as the writer should have more discernment than his teachers. Alas for the teachers! But he might have saved his laugh, for the superior wisdom claimed has to do exclusively with the Divine law as a guide for life: and of this the pupil might well have known more than his teachers, who were probably Greeks appointed by the Syrian government to instruct the Jews in the religion and philosophy

For thy testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged, 100
Because I have kept thy precepts.
I have refrained my feet from every evil way, 101
That I might observe thy word.
I have not turned aside from thy judgements; 102
For thou hast taught me.
How sweet are thy words unto my taste! 103
Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get understanding: 104
Therefore I hate every false way.

---

of the dominant power. The teaching of the law, and even of Hebrew, was suppressed by the Syrians.

In *Pirqe Aboth* (a Mishna tract) verse 99[a] is quoted and explained as meaning, 'From all my teachers I have gotten understanding' (see iv. 1). But in the present verse the comparative is required by the sense, though the Hebrew allows the other translation.

testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

100. Knowledge of the law comes by obeying it: cf. *solvitur ambulando.*

I have kept: better, 'I keep.'

precepts: read, 'statutes.'

101. I have refrained: better, 'I refrain' (= hold back).

every evil way: i. e. 'evil conduct of every kind.'

Baethgen unnecessarily excludes the verb in 101[b], rendering 'on account of thy word': but metre requires not the exclusion, as he assumes, but the retention of the verb, if we make the verse a distich as we should.

102. Jehovah has been his real teacher in the law. How? Through His law. So we have the apparent paradox: Through His law Jehovah teaches the Psalmist to keep the law. No inner teacher is in question here. The Divine word is its own interpreter.

103. sweet: Heb. 'smooth,' then 'agreeable.' In xix. 10 we have the same thought, but the adjective rendered 'sweet' is from a wholly different root.

thy words: better, 'thy sayings.'

104. false way: perhaps 'false religion' is meant: see Acts ix. 2 for this sense of 'way.' The word 'way' may have this sense also in verse 101.

נ NUN.

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path.
106 I have sworn, and have confirmed it,
That I will observe thy righteous judgements.
107 I am afflicted very much:
Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.
108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth,
O LORD,
And teach me thy judgements.
109 My soul is continually in my hand;
Yet do I not forget thy law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me;
Yet went I not astray from thy precepts.

NUN.

105–112. *God's word gives light and joy.*

105. feet: so LXX, Pesh.: but the M.T., Targ., Jero. have 'foot.'

path: so M.T., Targ., Jero., but in LXX, Pesh. 'paths.'

God's word gives guidance at all time: in the night it is as a lamp; in the day as the light of the sun.

106. and have confirmed it: read (with Jero., Calvin, Baethgen, &c.), 'and will confirm it.' But LXX, Pesh., Targ., and M.T., and most moderns, support the R.V. In the Hebrew the difference is in one vowel only. 'Confirm,' i. e. ratify.

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

108. Accept: *lit.* 'be pleased with,' 'accept as satisfactory': so l. 18.

freewill offerings: sacrifices spontaneously presented.

freewill offerings of my mouth: i. e. my prayers and praises: see l. 14, li. 19; Heb. xiii. 15.

judgements: read 'commandments': see verse 106.

109. My soul . . . in my hand: i. e. 'I am in danger of losing my life': the same idiom in Judges xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5, xxviii. 21; Job xiii. 4. The LXX renders 'My life is continually in thy hands,' missing the sense of the Hebrew.

Yet do I not, &c.: the usual profession of integrity.

110. Yet went I not astray: see verse 176.

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; 111
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes, 112
For ever, even unto the end.

ס SAMECH.

I hate them that are of a double mind; 113
But thy law do I love.
Thou art my hiding place and my shield: 114
I hope in thy word.
Depart from me, ye evil-doers; 115
That I may keep the commandments of my God.
Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live; 116
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.

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111. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

have I taken, &c.: for the verb we should probably substitute a noun with the same consonants: render then 'Thy admonitions are my inheritance for ever.' Instead of Canaan, an inheritance now under foreign domination, the pious Israelite boasted of an eternal, inalienable inheritance—the law of God. In xvi. 5 f. Jehovah is Himself the inheritance of Israel.

112. For ever . . . end: render, 'as an eternal reward'; see on verse 33. The mention in verse 111 of an inheritance in the law naturally suggests the thought of an eternal reward, the reward consisting of obedience to the law.

SAMEKH.

113-120. *Security in Jehovah's law from unbelief and ruin.*

113. them that are of a double mind: read (changing the vowels only), 'schismatics.' 'apostates.' The reference is to those who had joined the Greek (or Samaritan?) party. The ancient versions miss the sense of the Hebrew.

114. my hiding place: where I am safe because unseen: see xxvii. 5, xxxii. 7, lxi. 2, xci. 1: the thought is safety.

my shield: to protect me; my defence: see iii. 3, vii. 10, xviii. 2, 30.

115. The first part of the verse follows vi. 8[a].

116. according unto: read (with Aq., Pesh., Targ.), 'by means of' (**thy word**), changing Hebrew *k* to *b* which are much alike.

be ashamed: i. e. be disappointed in what I hoped for; see Isa. i. 29, xx. 5, &c.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe,
And shall have respect unto thy statutes continually.
118 Thou hast set at nought all them that err from thy statutes;
For their deceit is falsehood.
119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross:
Therefore I love thy testimonies.
120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee;
And I am afraid of thy judgements.

ע AIN.

121 I have done judgement and justice:
Leave me not to mine oppressors.
122 Be surety for thy servant for good:

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117. and I shall be safe: better, 'so that I may be set in a free (unrestrained) place': see on verse 94 and on cvii. 6.

And shall have respect, &c.: read (with the ancient versions), 'Then shall I delight myself in thy statutes continually.'

118. set at nought: better, 'rejected,' 'cast away': so Jero., Pesh. and the cognate verb in Assyrian. The Hebrew word occurs here only.

statutes: read, 'precepts.'

their deceit: read (with LXX, Jero., Pesh., &c., changing one consonant), 'their conversation.'

falsehood: i.e. 'false,' noun for adjective as often in Hebrew: see on verse 75 (**righteous**).

119. Thou puttest away, &c.: read (making slight changes), 'I have counted all the wicked of the earth as dross.' So the LXX.: but the other Greek versions Aq. and Sym. and also Jero. read, 'Thou hast counted,' &c.

120. trembleth: Heb. 'stands up as hair when one shudders': see Job iv. 15, 'my flesh creeps.'

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

AIN.

121–128. *Confidence expressed that Jehovah will stand by His servant.*

121. Render: 'I have performed what was ordained (by thee) and what is just,' &c.

122. Render: 'Give thy word as surety' (=pledge thy word) 'for my well-being,' &c.

thy servant: read, 'thy word.' If the M.T. is followed, one of the eight synonyms for God's law is lacking in this strophe.

Let not the proud oppress me.
Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, 123
And for thy righteous word.
Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, 124
And teach me thy statutes.
I am thy servant, give me understanding; 125
That I may know thy testimonies.
It is time for the LORD to work; 126
For they have made void thy law.
Therefore I love thy commandments 127
Above gold, yea, above fine gold.
Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all *things* 128
to be right;
And I hate every false way.

PE.

Thy testimonies are wonderful: 129

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123. fail: see on verse 82: 'I am dying for thy deliverance,' 'thy enlargement'; see on verse 94 and on cvii. 6.

125. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

126. to work: the Hebrew verb is used absolutely for 'to execute judgement,' 'to administer justice by punishing the wicked'; so in Jer. xxviii. 23 and in Ezek. xxxi. 11. The second part of the verse shows that this is the sense to be understood here.

127. Render: 'Above everything I love thy commandments; Above gold and fine gold.'

Therefore: read (changing the last consonant), 'Above everything.'

gold: render, 'fine gold'; see xix. 11.

128. Render (making slight textual changes): 'Therefore I have walked in a straight way, according to thy precepts: Every false way' (=faith) 'I hate.'

esteem: the Hebrew verb can only mean 'to walk in a straight way,' supplying the object, as must often be done in Hebrew: see 1 Sam. vi. 12, &c.

PE.

129-136. *Guidance through the word.*

129. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

wonderful: the word (a noun) used in lxxii. 12, lxxxviii. 10

Therefore doth my soul keep them.
130 The opening of thy words giveth light;
It giveth understanding unto the simple.
131 I opened wide my mouth, and panted;
For I longed for thy commandments.
132 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,
As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
133 Order my footsteps in thy word;
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Redeem me from the oppression of man:
So will I observe thy precepts.

(see on), lxxxix. 5. The Hebrew word rendered 'wonderful things' in verse 18 has the same root.

130. opening: Heb. 'door,' 'doorway.' Here the latter is meant. In Palestine houses are mostly windowless, the light entering through the doorway. Light comes through God's word as the sun's light through an eastern door.

simple: in Heb. 'doorway' and 'simple' are much alike, and a word play is intended: cf. English, 'The *door* gives light to the *dull*.' On the meaning of 'simple' see on cxvi. 6.

131. I opened wide my mouth: an attitude of expectancy; see Job xxix. 23; cf. lxxxi. 10.

panted: fig. for 'eagerly desired.'

I longed: an Aramaic word found nowhere else in the O. T.

132. Turn, &c.: God conceived of as turned away in anger.

As thou usest to do: Heb. 'According to (thy) ordinance'; the noun used in lxxxi. 4 and there so translated (see on). He pleads not custom, but God's own ordained principles.

thy name: 'Thee, as thou art revealed.'

133. Order: better, 'direct' or 'guide.'

footsteps: the Hebrew word means also 'feet,' and it is so rendered in lxxiv. 3: it occurs also in cxl. 5, &c.

iniquity: the Hebrew word means strictly 'naughtiness': then 'wickedness' in general. In Hos. xii. 2; Isa. xli. 29, &c., the word denotes idolatry, and it may have that meaning here. 'Do not let me come under the sway of any one of these Syrian idols.'

134. Redeem: see on lxxiv. 2.

So will I, &c. better, 'So that I may keep thy precepts.' The oppression was a hindrance to his obedience.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; 135
And teach me thy statutes.
Mine eyes run down with rivers of water, 136
Because they observe not thy law.

ץ TZADE.

Righteous art thou, O LORD, 137
And upright are thy judgements.
Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness 138
And very faithfulness.
My zeal hath consumed me, 139
Because mine adversaries have forgotten thy words.
Thy word is very pure; 140
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
I am small and despised: 141
Yet do not I forget thy precepts.
Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, 142

135. 135^a is the same in substance as the prayer in lxxx. 3, 7, 19; see on lxxx. 3.

136. 136^c from Lam. iii. 48. Note the concern of the poet that so many should be disobedient to Jehovah!

TSADE.

137–144. *God's ordinances just, pure, and full of support.*

137. are thy judgements: better, 'in thy ordinances.' Wellhausen joins this word with the next verse.

138. Render: 'The statutes (which) thou hast commanded are (full of) righteousness And much faithfulness.' 'Righteousness' has the same meaning as 'faithfulness' in this verse: see on verse 75.

139 is based on lxix. 9.

My zeal: so Heb. and Sym.: but LXX and Aq. have '*thy* zeal' (= zeal for thee), under the influence of lxix. 9.

consumed: Heb. 'undone,' 'destroyed.'

140. pure: tried, tested; having stood the test. Cf. Greek *dokimos*: see xii. 6, xviii. 30.

141. small: not 'young' as LXX, though the Hebrew can mean that: but = 'insignificant' as the word **despised** shows; so Sym., Jero.; cf. Judges vi. 15 ('the least,' same adjective).

Devotion to the law more than counterbalances the drawback of belonging to a now unimportant and despised nation.

And thy law is truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me:
Yet thy commandments are my delight.
144 Thy testimonies are righteous for ever:
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

ף KOPH.

145 I have called with my whole heart; answer me, O LORD:
I will keep thy statutes.
146 I have called unto thee; save me,
And I shall observe thy testimonies.
147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried:
I hoped in thy words.
148 Mine eyes prevented the night watches,

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143. Trouble: anguish: both the words have in them the radical idea of straitness: but the former is usually contrasted with enlargement as a figure for unrestrained joy: see on cvii. 6.

144. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

KOPH.

145–152. *The Psalmist prays earnestly for faithfulness amid persecution.*

145. I have called: better, 'I call': in verse 146 'unto thee' (in Hebrew a mere suffix) is added: rhythm requires its omission in verse 145.

146. And I shall observe: better, 'So that I may,' &c.
testimonies: read, 'precepts': see verse 152.

147. Render: 'I forestall the dawn' (='I rise before dawn') 'so that I may cry for help, (while) I wait hopefully for (the fulfilment of) thy word' (=promise).

148. Render: My eyes forestall the night watches,' &c., i. e. I am awake, meditating on thy word before the watchman announces, by trumpet, a new watch; so much is my mind set on thy law.

Before the Exile, and for a considerable time afterwards, the Hebrews had three night watches, as the Greeks. Among the latter, as in Jerusalem (see cxxvii. 1), with the announcement of a new watch a fresh batch of soldiers guarded the city. But the Jerusalem temple was also guarded by successive relays of Levites, and since the Psalmist was probably a Levite, the refer-

That I might meditate in thy word.
Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: 149
Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy judgements.
They draw nigh that follow after wickedness; 150
They are far from thy law.
Thou art nigh, O LORD; 151
And all thy commandments are truth.
Of old have I known from thy testimonies, 152
That thou hast founded them for ever.

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ence here seems to be to the temple watches. When the Jews came under Roman influence they adopted four watches instead of the Greek three, and it is this Roman custom which prevailed in our Lord's time: see Mark xiii. 35, where all the four watches are named, and Matt. xiv. 25, Mark vi. 48, where the fourth is mentioned. It was the triple watch which obtained when the present Psalm was written, unless we are to give the Psalm a very late date. The first watch cannot be meant in this verse, as that was too early for sleep.

prevented: Old English for 'anticipate.' Perhaps we are to construe this verb here adverbially with the following verb, according to a common Hebrew idiom. The translation would then be, 'I cry for help before the dawn.'

word: read (with Jero., Pesh., Targ.) 'words,' though LXX, Sym., and *keth.* have the plural.

149. Hear: the Hebrew is a strong form of the imperative = 'O do hear.'

Quicken: i. e. 'revive.'

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

150. Render: 'They draw near that pursue me with malicious cunning,' &c.

that follow after: read (changing the final vowel), 'that follow' (or 'pursue') 'me.'

wickedness: Heb. 'with malicious scheming,' adv. acc. Perhaps we should (with Duhm) alter one vowel in the verb and render 'My persecutors employ' (*lit.* 'bring near') 'wicked scheming.'

151. Thou art nigh: if my persecutors are near (or bring their wicked plots near), thou art also near.

truth: better, 'full of faithfulness': noun for adjective; see on verse 75.

152. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

ר RESH.

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me;
For I do not forget thy law.
154 Plead thou my cause, and redeem me:
Quicken me according to thy word.
155 Salvation is far from the wicked;
For they seek not thy statutes.
156 Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD:
Quicken me according to thy judgements.
157 Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries;
Yet have I not swerved from thy testimonies.
158 I beheld the treacherous dealers, and was grieved;
Because they observe not thy word.

RESH.

153-160. *In great distress the Psalmist is faithful, and entreats Jehovah's help.*

153. 153[a] is based on ix. 13.

154. Jehovah was conceived among the Israelites as a judge taking the part of the wronged against the wrongdoer. The ordinary Hebrew word for 'prayer' means, perhaps, strictly an entreaty to God to intervene on behalf of the oppressed; see Introd. to Ps. lxxxvi (*Title*).

redeem: see on lxxiv. 2 (*ga'al*).

word: better, 'saying,' though here in the sense of promise. Pesh., Jero. read, 'by thy word': see verses 25, 28, 40, 50, 93.

155. Note the connexion assumed between right conduct and well-being, and the converse.

Salvation: not of course in the evangelical sense. The Hebrew word means strictly the state of being at large; see on cvii. 6.

seek: see on verse 2.

156. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

157. adversaries: *lit.* 'those that hem me in.' The Hebrew noun is etymologically the antithesis of that usually rendered 'deliverer,' *lit.* 'enlarger': see on cvii. 6.

158. Render: 'When I behold those who act treacherously I loathe (them).'

grieved: see on xcv. 10.

word (*imrah*: see verse 154): read, 'commandments.'

Consider how I love thy precepts: 159
Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.
The sum of thy word is truth; 160
And every one of thy righteous judgements *endureth* for ever.

ש SHIN.

Princes have persecuted me without a cause; 161
But my heart standeth in awe of thy words.
I rejoice at thy word, 162
As one that findeth great spoil.
I hate and abhor falsehood; 163
But thy law do I love.
Seven times a day do I praise thee, 164

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159. Consider: Heb. 'See,' i. e. reflect: so in verse 153[a].

160. sum: i. e. sum and substance. The rendering 'beginning' (so the ancient versions and the older commentators) is inadmissible here and in cxxxix. 17, where the same Hebrew word occurs. It is not merely the 'beginning' of God's revelation that is faithful: it is *all* faithful.

And every one, &c.: render (slightly changing one Hebrew word): 'And all thy righteous ordinances' (plural for singular, see verse 164) 'are ever-enduring.'

SHIN (*or* SIN).

One letter represents *Sin* and *Shin*. The latter is perhaps included in *Samekh*, with which it is more closely allied. In unpointed Hebrew *Sin* and *Shin* are written alike.

161-168. *Those who keep the law have inner peace and comfort even when persecuted.*

161. Princes: probably the King and Court of Syria are meant; or perhaps Israelitish nobles who had adopted the religion of the conqueror and had been appointed judges.

without a cause: without having any good reason for it. The word can mean, and elsewhere often does mean, 'to no purpose': 'they gain nothing by it, for I stand firm in my respect for the law.'

162. word: read (with *keth.*, LXX, Jero., &c.), 'words.'

163. falsehood: i. e. false religion, idolatry.

law: read, 'statutes.'

164. Seven: a round number as in Lev. xxvi. 18, &c.

Because of thy righteous judgements.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law;
And they have none occasion of stumbling.

166 I have hoped for thy salvation, O LORD,
And have done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath observed thy testimonies;
And I love them exceedingly.

168 I have observed thy precepts and thy testimonies;
For all my ways are before thee.

ת TAU.

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD:

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165. Render (freely): 'Those who love Thy law have abundant happiness, And no one can cause any interruption in their happiness.'

peace: the Hebrew and the cognate Arabic, Syriac, &c., words include all the essential elements of well-being, health, contentment, outward felicity, &c. When the Semite greets you, using this noun, he means much more than *peace* to you, though no English word corresponds to the Semitic. N. T. Greek also renders the Hebrew greeting, 'peace to you[1].' Of course, under some conditions peace may be the one thing necessary for comfort and well-being.

occasion of stumbling: the Hebrew and Greek words mean that which causes one to stumble, and so stops one's progress. The enemy (Syria) may endeavour to trip up the pious Israelite in his course of happy trust, but Jehovah will frustrate this hostile intent. The stumblingblock may—as in 1 John ii. 10—have here a subjective meaning. The sense would then be: 'Those who love thy law have much happiness, and no fears (or distracting thoughts) can disturb their inner joy.' But the Hebrew and Greek words denote usually something which causes *others* to fall.

166. 166[a] is a reminiscence of Gen. xlix. 18.

done: LXX 'loved,' as in verse 163.

167. 167[a], see 129[b].

And I love: LXX, Jero. 'I loved.'

TAU.

169–176. *Sundry petitions; as for revival, favour, guidance, &c.*

169. Render: 'My ringing cry (of anguish) comes near before

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[1] See Luke xxiv. 36.

Give me understanding according to thy word.
Let my supplication come before thee: 170
Deliver me according to thy word.
Let my lips utter praise; 171
For thou teachest me thy statutes.
Let my tongue sing of thy word; 172
For all thy commandments are righteousness.
Let thine hand be ready to help me; 173
For I have chosen thy precepts.
I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; 174
And thy law is my delight.
Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; 175
And let thy judgements help me.
I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; 176
For I do not forget thy commandments.

A Song of Ascents. **120**

In my distress I cried unto the LORD, 1

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thee, O Jehovah: Revive' (so Pesh., Baethgen, Cheyne (2)) 'me according to thy word.'

170. supplication: Heb. 'prayer for favour.'

171. utter: Heb. 'pour' or 'belch forth' (as a fountain); so xciv. 1. The verb is stronger than 'utter.'

172. word (*imrah*): read 'faithfulness'; 'word' occurs in verses 169 f.

commandments: read, 'admonitions.'

173. thine hand = 'thy power.'

174. The same thought in verse 20.

I have longed: better, 'I long'; same verb in verse 4.

175. and it shall praise, &c.: better (as the Heb.), 'so that it may praise,' &c.

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

176. Render: 'I am going astray as a lost sheep,' &c. According to the Hebrew accents we must translate: 'I am going astray: as a lost sheep, O seek thy servant': so J. H. Michaelis, Hupfeld, Delitzsch; but the rhythm opposes this.

The 'Pilgrim Psalms.' (cxx-cxxxiv.)

Pss. cxx to cxxxiv stand by themselves as a group apart. They have all of them common metrical, or at least poetical, features, and they are all brief, bright, and beautiful. Each of them has for

And he answered me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,

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title 'A Song of the goings up,' or rather 'Songs of the going up,' the plural of the second word referring to the whole expression according to a common Hebrew idiom: cf. the English 'Song-of-the-going-ups.' The slight variation in the title of Ps. cxxi is probably due to a copyist's error. It is now generally held that these fifteen Psalms were sung by the pilgrim bands who came up to Jerusalem in order to attend the three annual feasts. The title makes it likely that a special hymn-book existed containing 'Pilgrim Psalms.' The Psalms in the group had in many if not all cases an origin quite distinct from the use to which they were thus put. For other opinions see the larger commentaries.

PSALM CXX.

Theme. Prayer to be delivered from the tongue of slander.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for deliverance (verses 1 f.).

(2) Punishment of the slanderer (verses 3 f.).

(3) The sorrows of exile (verses 5–7).

Psalms of the 'goings up' are appropriately prefaced by one which depicts the hard lot of the scattered Jews (see verses 5–7). The sadness of this Psalm soon gives way to the gladness of the Psalms which follow, a gladness stirred up by the thoughts which the festivals recalled. Jehovah had been good to the nation in the long ago: he would not now forget to be gracious.

But though it is likely that this conception of the Psalm caused it to be placed at the head of the 'Pilgrim Psalms,' it does not represent the purpose of the writer, which was, apparently, to pray for protection against those of his own fellow countrymen who had made common cause with the Samaritan party, or, it may be, with the Syrians.

The Psalm has much in common with number 12 of 'The Psalms of Solomon,' the latter being probably uttered by a zealous Pharisee against an unbelieving Sadducee.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Nothing definite can be said on this point: but the Psalm might well have sprung out of the Samaritan persecutions of Nehemiah's day.

1 f. *Prayer to be delivered from treacherous foes.*

1. distress: *lit.* 'straitness': see on cvii. 6.

cried: better, 'called.'

2. See lii. 1–4.

'Men say, "I have given so often that I can give no more." God says, "I have given, therefore I will give"' (McLaren). God's having answered (verse 1) gives the ground for the prayer of this verse.

And from a deceitful tongue.
What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done 3
more unto thee,
Thou deceitful tongue?
Sharp arrows of the mighty, 4
With coals of juniper.
Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, 5
That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
My soul hath long had her dwelling 6

---

lips: so the LXX, Pesh., Targ.: but the M. T. and Jero. have the singular 'lip.'

deceitful tongue: Heb., 'tongue (which is) deceit,' i. e. which is full of deceit: see on cix. 4 and on cxix. 75.

3 f. *The punishment of slanderers.*

3. Render: 'What shall He (Jehovah) give thee, and what more shall He (give) thee, O thou deceitful tongue?' The verb has no expressed subject, though 'Jehovah' occurs in the previous verse and is probably understood. If the subject is 'undefined' the passive will correctly express it ('What shall one give' = 'What shall be given'). Even then Jehovah will be the implied subject.

4. The punishment is expressed in terms describing his own crime. This verse supplies the answer to the question in verse 3. The sharpened arrows of a warrior will pierce that tongue which shot forth the arrows of slander. Moreover, those people who destroyed, as if by fire, many an innocent life will be themselves burnt up in the fiercest fire.

juniper: better, 'broom,' the root of which is still used in Palestine for the manufacture of charcoal; the latter makes the hottest and the longest enduring fire, and is the ordinary fuel among Arabs.

5-7. *The writer's sad lot in having to dwell among a cruel and barbarous people.* Originally the proper names were used typically to denote the character of the writer's treacherous fellow countrymen. But to the Jews of the Diaspora they stood for the rough and ruthless people whose lands they inhabited. The word **tents** does not of necessity imply Beduin life: see on cxviii. 15 and cxxxii. 3.

5. Meshech (*extension*): the name of a people living between the Black and Caspian Seas (Gen. x. 2).

Kedar (*black*): one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 13): then an Arabian tribe. In later Hebrew it denotes, as here. Beduin Arabs generally.

With him that hateth peace.
7 I am *for* peace:
But when I speak, they are for war.

121 A Song of Ascents.

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
2 My help *cometh* from the LORD,

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6. peace: see on cxix. 165.

7. I am *for* peace: *lit.* 'I am peace,' i. e. I seek to promote peace: see on cix. 4 and on cxix. 75; and for the word 'peace' see on cxix. 165.

But when I speak: the word rendered **peace** must be supplied: see xxviii. 3. 'To speak *Shalom*' (peace) means to utter the usual friendly greeting. They return war for his good wishes.

PSALM CXXI.

Theme. Jehovah, Israel's guardian.

I. *Title.* 'A song belonging to the goings up' (='the ascents'): probably an editorial variation due to a desire to make the usual title of these Pilgrim Psalms more suitable. We must read 'Songs of the ascents.'

II. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist's confidence in Jehovah who helps him (verses 1 f.).
(2) Jehovah is the keeper of Israel (verses 3-5).
(3) He preserves under all circumstances (verses 6-8).
Verses 1 f. are uttered in the first person: the rest of the Psalm in the second. Perhaps the Psalm was sung antiphonally.

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm enabling us to decide when and why it was originally composed.

1 f. *Jehovah the Helper.*

1. unto the mountains: i. e. towards Jerusalem, which stands on mountains, and is (almost wholly) surrounded by them. The temple mountain is particularly in the writer's thoughts. Daniel prayed towards Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 11) as the Jews still do, and as the Moslem does towards Mekka, and the Zoroastrian (Parsee) towards the rising sun (the East). The priests of Mithras always prayed with their faces to the sun. The Orientation of Christian churches is connected with the last two, and has no Jewish, Christian, or Mahommedan origin; see on cxxiii. 1.

2. from the LORD: not from the **mountains.**

Which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: 3
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel 4
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD is thy keeper: 5
The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day, 6
Nor the moon by night.
The LORD shall keep thee from all evil; 7
He shall keep thy soul.
The LORD shall keep thy going out and thy coming in, 8
From this time forth and for evermore.

Which made, &c.: and so unlike heathen deities.

3-5. *Jehovah the keeper of Israel.*

3. He will not suffer, &c.: it is the subjective negative (*'al*, cf. Greek *mē*) that is used here: when, as here, it goes with the indicative it brings with it an emotional element: 'He will not, nay, in harmony with His nature cannot, suffer,' &c. The sense shows it is not to be construed as imperative or optative, though the Hebrew permits this.

4. Behold: hardly to be translated; like *inna* in Arabic it serves to introduce a statement.

5. thy shade upon thy right hand: in Hebrew 'right hand' = south, as the left hand = north, the direction of these quarters looking eastward. (Is this a survival of sun-worship?) The sense is, 'Jehovah is thy shade on that side of thee which is exposed to the sun when he is at his zenith, when his heat is fiercest'; cf. 'by day' in verse 6. But see on cxlii. 4.

6-8. *Jehovah preserves Israel always.*

6. He will protect against both sunstroke and moonstroke. The former is referred to in 2 Kings iv. 19 and Isa. xlix. 10, and is common in the East. In folklore moonstroke plays a large part, cf. 'lunacy,' 'lunatic.' In Welsh *lloerig* corresponds exactly to 'lunatic.'

8. going out: i. e. for the purpose of labour, business, &c.

coming in: referring to the life in the home; see 2 Sam. iii. 25, &c.

Going out and **coming in** embrace the whole of a man's life (see Deut. xxviii. 6, xxxi. 2, &c.), and that whole is guarded by

122 A Song of Ascents; of David.

1 I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of the LORD.
2 Our feet are standing
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem;
3 Jerusalem, that art builded
As a city that is compact together:

---

our loving Father in heaven from this moment until death—the Psalmist has no life beyond death in mind; see on cxix. 44.

PSALM CXXII.

Theme. A pilgrim's meditations during the festival.

I. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist's joy when invited to go up to the feast (verse 1).

(2) The joy felt in being at Jerusalem, and some reflections awakened (verses 2-5).

(3) Prayer and request for prayer on behalf of Jerusalem (verses 6-9).

The language of the Psalm is so fresh and vivid that it can best be explained if the writer is supposed to be in Jerusalem attending the feast.

II. *Authorship and Date.* A date much later than the Exile is suggested by the numerous Aramaisms, and by the writer's attitude towards centralization of worship at Jerusalem (that of the Priestly Code). It is the scattered Jews alone who make the pilgrimage: there is no reference to the northern kingdom.

1. *Joy at being invited to go up.*

1. when they said: Heb. and LXX, 'at those who said': but the omission of a small letter (*yod*) and a change of vowels yield the rendering of the E.VV.

Let us go, &c.: Heb., LXX, Jero. 'We will go.'

2-5. *At Jerusalem: joyful thoughts.*

2. are standing: the 'perf. of experience,' 'have been and are still standing': a common Hebrew usage.

Within thy gates, O Jerusalem: so Heb., Pesh., Targ., Jero. But LXX reads 'within the gates of Jerusalem,' and for metrical reasons Bickell, Baethgen, Duhm, and Cheyne (2) adopt this: but the next verse seems to require the vocative, and it is doubtful if the metre would be helped by the proposed change.

3. As a city that is compact together: better, 'To be a city united closely together': the preposition translated 'as' (a city) is what is called the *kaph veritatis*, and it denotes what a thing *is*, not what it is *like*. Jerusalem within the walls has narrow streets joined closely together.

Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD, 4
For a testimony unto Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
For there are set thrones for judgement, 5
The thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 6
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, 7
And prosperity within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions' sakes, 8
I will now say, Peace be within thee.

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4 f. Note the rhetorical repetition of words ('anadiplosis') in these verses, a common feature in the 'Pilgrim' and 'Royal Psalms.' So in cxxxv. 12.

4. go up: better, 'went up': referring to the olden time.

tribes: at no time did the twelve (or ten?) tribes as such make pilgrimages to Jerusalem. But the poet glances backward to the time long past when his forefathers, spoken of as tribes, visited Jerusalem just as he does, and for the same purpose.

the LORD: Heb. 'Jah' (Yah); see on lxxxix. 8 and civ. 35.

***For* a testimony,** &c.: render, 'It is a law for Israel there (=at Jerusalem) to praise Jehovah': the word 'testimony' = 'law,' as in xix. 7. For **name** (*Shēm*) read *there* (*Shām*), and place the 'unto' before 'Jehovah': then render as above.

5. there: i. e. at Jerusalem.

are set thrones: better, 'were placed thrones': in the far back times kings ruled on their thrones: these thrones were sat on by kings belonging to the Davidic dynasty.

for judgement: i. e. for all the functions of royalty. Cf. the judges who preceded the kings. The poet is recalling the past, and not, as Wellhausen and others hold, depicting the present.

6-9. *Prayer and request for prayer on behalf of Jerusalem.* In these verses there are word-plays which no translation can reproduce: the first four words in verse 6 are these: *Sha'ălu Shĕlōm Yĕrūshālĕm yishlāyū.*

6. They shall prosper, &c.: render, 'May thy tents' (='thy dwellings') 'be secure.'

For **They . . . that love thee** read, with Ewald, Duhm, 'Thy tents,' after Job xii. 6.

8. I will now say, &c.: render, 'Let me now' (='I pray thee') 'say, Peace be to thee.'

9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God
I will seek thy good.

123 A Song of Ascents.

1 Unto thee do I lift up mine eyes,
O thou that sittest in the heavens.
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;
So our eyes *look* unto the LORD our God,
Until he have mercy upon us.
3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us:

PSALM CXXIII.

Theme. The soul looking away from its distress to its Master and God.

I. *Contents.* (1) The eyes turned in faith to Jehovah (verses 1 f.). (2) Prayer for help in distress (verses 3 f.).

There is more rhyme in this Psalm than in any other commensurate part of the O. T., though in a translation this feature is necessarily lost. Rhyme is exceedingly rare in Biblical poetry, but it abounds in the poetry of the Arabs, none of the latter older than say A. D. 500.

II. *Authorship and Date.* It is impossible to say what is the specific distress which constitutes the background of this Psalm; see verses 3 f. It might have been that experienced in Babylon, or it might have been that due to the Samaritan, or even the Syrian persecutions.

1 f. The upturned eyes: why do Jews, Moslems, and Christians look up when they pray, as if God were in that direction more than in any other? To the Australian, our *up* is his *down*. It may be, as Gunkel suggests, a survival of astral religion.

2. Behold: see on cxxi. 4.

servants: Heb. 'men servants': of these there seem to have been several in a Jewish house of the ordinary kind.

These servants depend on what the master hands them: so they look to his hand, just as a domestic animal will follow the hand of one who feeds it. The connexion shows that it is the hand as *giving* and not as *commanding* which is here meant.

3 f. *Prayer in trouble.*

3. Have mercy, &c.: Heb. 'be gracious to us.'

For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
Our soul is exceedingly filled 4
With the scorning of those that are at ease,
And with the contempt of the proud.

A Song of Ascents; of David. **124**

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, 1
Let Israel now say;
If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, 2
When men rose up against us:
Then they had swallowed us up alive, 3
When their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us, 4

4. proud: so the *keth.* and the ancient versions. But the Massorites (*qr.*) make two words, the English of which is 'proud oppressors': hardly (as Kirkpatrick) 'proudest oppressors,' though the Hebrew (*qr.*) allows both renderings.

PSALM CXXIV.

Theme. Praise for a recent deliverance.

I. *Contents.* (1) We should have been undone had not Jehovah helped us (verses 1–5).

(2) Praise to Jehovah for His goodness in delivering His people (verses 6–8).

Cf. with this Psalm Jonah's song of thanksgiving (Jonah ii. 3–10).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm celebrates the escape of the nation from some plot laid for them, but it is impossible to decide what that was, or to what period it belongs. The deliverance from Babylon does not suit the Psalm, as it is some sudden turn of events that is clearly implied.

Note the repetition of certain catch phrases in succeeding lines of this Psalm ('anadiplosis'), and see on xciii. 4, xcvi. 13, cxxii. 4 f., and cxxxv. 12.

1–5. *Jehovah's deliverance.*

In verses 1 f. we have a double protasis, one in each verse. Compare with these two verses the structure of cxxix. 1 f. In verses 3–5 we have a triple apodosis —a threefold statement of what would have happened without Jehovah's help.

3. swallowed, &c.: as wild beasts devour their prey; see Jer. li. 34. The enemy is described under the same figure in verse 6.

4. The devastating effects of the wild mountain torrents of Palestine, and especially the loss of life and property caused by

The stream had gone over our soul:
5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
6 Blessed be the LORD,
Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
8 Our help is in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

125 A Song of Ascents.

1 They that trust in the LORD

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the rushing overflowing Jordan, have often supplied Psalmists with a figure of ruin due to foreign and native oppressors. See for the same metaphor xviii. 16, lxix. 1, 2, 15; Isa. viii. 7 f.; Lam. iii. 54. Probably in all such passages there is an implied reference to the primaeval ocean of the creation-myth: see on lxxiv. 11.

stream: a mountain torrent: these are in Palestine suddenly swollen after a storm.

our soul = us; see on cvii. 18.

5. proud: better, 'surging,' or 'swelling.'

our soul = us; see on cvii. 18.

6–8. *Praise for deliverance.*

6. See on verse 3.

Blessed: i. e. 'praised': see on lxxxiv. 5.

7. The thought in this verse is: 'We were ensnared as a bird: but we escaped as an ensnared bird sometimes does.' See Lam. iii. 52.

snare: a kind of trap-net used for catching birds.

and we: the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew: 'and we—we are escaped.'

8. Both parts of the verse occur frequently in the Psalter: see also for 8^b, Jonah ii. 9. **The name of the LORD** = Jehovah Himself: see on lxxix. 9 and on lxxxiii. 16.

PSALM CXXV.

Theme. The security of God's people.

I. *Contents.* (1) Safety of all who trust in Jehovah (verses 1–3). (2) Prayer on behalf of the righteous (verses 4 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm does not date itself, and it is useless speculating as to when it was written. This Psalm, and others like it (Pss. cxxiii f., &c.), might have been composed for use in worship, with no reference to any historical situation.

Are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth
for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, 2
So the LORD is round about his people,
From this time forth and for evermore.
For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot 3
of the righteous;
That the righteous put not forth their hands unto iniquity.
Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, 4

The experience they imply was, and is still, to a large extent general.

1–3. *The security of those who put their trust in God.*

1. Believers are compared to **mount Zion,** which has its roots deep down in the earth, and cannot be moved. A visitor to his mountain home, after decades of absence, will, amid countless changes in other things, find the lie of the land, its mountains, valleys, and rivers, unchanged.

2. As the believer is compared to Mount Zion, so Jehovah is likened to those mountains which encompass Jerusalem, and which, in times of war, proved its best defence. On every side, except on the north-west (Jaffa Gate), the sacred city is mountain-bound; so he that trusts in Jehovah is encompassed on all sides; see Zech. ii. 5.

3. Render: 'Surely He will not let the sceptre of the wicked man rest upon the land allotted to the righteous,' &c.

For: the word means also 'Surely,' a sense far more suitable here. This verse applies the principle of security expressed in 1 f. to the actual state of the nation.

sceptre of wickedness: better (with LXX, Pesh., A.V.), 'the sceptre of the wicked,' changing the Hebrew vowels only. But the Hebrew gives good sense, and is supported by Targ., Jero. The allusion is evidently to foreign dominion, either Persian or Syrian. Jehovah will be sure to set free His people, if they look to Him.

shall not rest: read as above, 'will not let . . . rest': so LXX, Eth.; see Isa. xxx. 32.

That the righteous, &c.: continued oppression might lead even the righteous to give way to sin, to doubt, or to disbelieve in the reign of righteousness. Duhm joins this clause with the following verse: **That the righteous . . .,** (4) **Do good,** &c.

4 f. *Prayer for the righteous.*

4. Do good: in Hebrew one word meaning 'show kindness,

And to them that are upright in their hearts.

5 But as for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,
The LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.
Peace be upon Israel.

126 A Song of Ascents.

1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion,

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favour to.' The verb has no ethical meaning, though, as in English, the adjective ('good') commonly has.

5. such as turn aside unto their crooked ways: Heb. 'Who turn (bend) aside their crooked (ways),' i. e. who turn their ways of life aside from what is right, making them crooked. The Hebrew word (*yashar*) generally translated 'upright' means strictly 'straight.'

The LORD shall lead: better, 'May Jehovah lead,' &c.; cf. Matt. xxv. 41.

PSALM CXXVI.

Theme. Past joy and present sorrow.

I. *Contents.* (1) The joy felt when, at a former time, prosperity returned (verses 1–3).

(2) Prayer and hope for a renewal of that prosperity (verses 4–6).

The Psalm assumes that at some not distant period in the past Jehovah turned the tide of the nation's affairs, making the people once more happy and prosperous. But there is another change, this time for the worse, and in the present Psalm we seem to have petition and hope that Jehovah may again bless and prosper the nation. Smend, Duhm, and Gunkel (following the Pesh., Targ., Ar.) regard the tenses of the verbs in verses 1–3 as all referring to the future, the perfects being 'perfects of certainty.' But this is a very unnatural way of treating the Psalm. The LXX, Eth., Calvin, and most moderns construe as preterites.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Many have supposed that verses 1–3 refer to the gladness which accompanied the return from Babylon, and that the distress spoken of in verses 4–6 is that endured during the Samaritan persecutions. But there is little evidence from which we can argue with confidence.

1. Render: 'When Jehovah restored the fortunes of Zion,' &c.

turned again the captivity: the word 'captivity' can denote 'captives,' abstract for concrete. But since Ewald's day most scholars consider the Hebrew word rendered 'captivity' to be an abstract noun from the verb 'to turn,' the phrase meaning *lit.* 'to turn the turning,' i. e. make a change in things, then

We were like unto them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter, 2
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
The LORD hath done great things for them.
The LORD hath done great things for us; 3
Whereof we are glad.
Turn again our captivity, O LORD, 4
As the streams in the South.
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 5

'to restore the fortunes.' In Job xlii. 10 the phrase can have no other meaning, and it was that passage which first set Ewald a-thinking on the matter.

dream, &c.: 'we could hardly think the fact of our deliverance real, so delighted were we: we thought we must be dreaming'; see Isa. xxix. 7^{b}; Luke xxiv. 41; Acts xii. 9. Sudden joy and sudden sorrow have often this stupefying effect.

2. When the consciousness of reality dawned, they laughed and sang, &c.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter: see Job viii. 21.

Then said, &c.: better, 'Then was it said among the heathen.' The verb has no definite subject.

The LORD hath done, &c.: see Joel ii. 20 f.

3. The LORD hath done, &c.: the community takes up the words of the heathen.

4–6. *Prayer and hope for a return of joy.*

4. Render: 'Turn, thou, O Jehovah, our fortunes, As brooks in the south land' (the *Negeb*) are turned.

streams in the South: the Hebrew word *Negeb* translated 'south' is a technical name for the arid region in the south of Judah (Judges i. 15, &c.). In the winter these parts were, in a measure, irrigated by streams which dried up when the summer came. Then after months and months of drought again came the life-giving streams, making the people laugh and sing. So, says the Psalmist, 'Let our winter streams come to us: it is our summer now, and a long and dry one too: bring us back the joy that has fled, as thou restorest to the south land its winter brooks.'

5. Those who sow in tears begotten of labour and anxiety, have joy when the reaping comes. Israel has toiled and wept enough: surely the time of joyous reaping has arrived.

shall reap: better, 'reap': a general principle is stated.

6 Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed;
He shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves *with him.*

127 A Song of Ascents; of Solomon.

1 Except the LORD build the house,
They labour in vain that build it:
Except the LORD keep the city,

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6. Render: 'He that bears (= brings) the trail of seed will go on his way weeping: (but) He shall assuredly come home with ringing shouts of joy, bearing his sheaves.'

bearing forth the seed: Heb. 'bearing the trail or draught of seed.' The Hebrew word rendered above 'trail' means 'what is hauled or drawn out of the sea,' as 'a haul of fish,' or, as in Job xxviii. 18, a 'haul of pearl oysters.' Here it stands for as much seed as one brings to sow.

PSALM CXXVII.

This Psalm, small as it is, is made up of two smaller ones, having no special connexion with each other. This is conceded by nearly all modern scholars.

Psalm cxxvii (1) (verses 1 f.).

Theme. Success impossible without Jehovah's protection.

I. *Title.* This Psalm and Ps. lxxii are the only ones connected in the title with the name Solomon. Perhaps there was a Solomon hymn-book, though in that case the hymns have been all lost, except the two named: cf., however, the nineteen 'Psalms of Solomon.' In the LXX of the present Psalm Solomon's name does not appear.

II. *Contents:* see *Theme.*

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm on which to base an opinion regarding these points.

1 f. *Human effort vain without Divine help.*

1. Render:

'Unless Jehovah build a house,
(The) builders labour upon it to no purpose:
Unless Jehovah keep (the) city,
(The) keeper (of it) is awake (in the night) to no purpose.'

They ... that build: better, '(the) builders': so LXX, Wellhausen, Baethgen, &c.

labour: read, 'labour upon it': so the authorities just named and the usage of the language; see Jonah iv. 10; Eccles. ii. 21.

The verb for 'labour' means 'to work oneself weary': even that avails not if God does not build with us, i. e. bless us.

The watchman waketh but in vain.
It is vain for you that ye rise up early, and so late take rest, 2
And eat the bread of toil:
For so he giveth unto his beloved sleep.
Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: 3

The watchman: *lit.* 'the keeper'; so cxxi. 4: the *keeper* cannot *keep* unless Jehovah *keeps* also.

waketh: i. e. 'wakes to watch': 'to act the part of keeper.' On the 'night watches' see on cxix. 148.

Verse 1 is inscribed on the front of the town hall at Ripon.

2. Render: 'It is vain for you that ye rise up early and that ye sit down late (at night) To eat the food earned by painful toil: He gives His beloved what is necessary (even) in (their) sleep.'

so late take rest: the principal verb here never means 'to take rest,' 'to lie down to rest,' though Hupfeld held that it does: *Shakab* is the Hebrew word for that. Nor does the compound expression = 'to sit up late,' but 'to sit late at table for the purpose of eating': they take their evening meal late because they kept on toiling so long. The expression 'sitting to eat,' &c. occurs in 1 Sam. xxvi. 24, and it belongs to the time when the Jews sat at meals; the Greek custom of reclining at meals was adopted by the Jews at a later time.

so he giveth, &c.: the word translated 'so' is here a noun = 'what is just,' 'proper,' 'sufficient': 'He gives what is suitable, sufficient.'

sleep: accusative of time: though Hebrew has virtually lost case endings it retains the functions of case, 'in sleep' = 'during sleep.' The idea is: Jehovah gives the needful to those whom He loves even if they cannot move a hand to toil—as it were when they are asleep. The lesson is simply, 'Be not anxious; He provides': there is no encouragement here for idleness or carelessness; we are to labour, but to trust as if all depended on God: see Matt. vi. 25–34; Prov. x. 22, &c.

Mrs. Browning's well-known poem is based on a wrong translation of the Psalm, but what that poem says is as true as ever.

Perhaps the Hebrew for sleep (*Shena*) is the corrupted form of *Selah*: its presence adds a strange thought, its form is irregular (Aramaic for Hebrew), and its omission (making the verse end with 'necessary' in the above proposed rendering) simplifies the verse.

Psalm cxxvii (2) (verses 3–5).

Theme. Children the joy and defence of their father.

And the fruit of the womb is *his* reward.
4 As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
So are the children of youth.
5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:
They shall not be ashamed,
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

128 A Song of Ascents.

1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD,

I. *Contents:* see *Theme.*

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm is of so general a character that hardly anything can be inferred from it as to when and under what circumstances it was composed.

3. children: the same Hebrew word is used for 'sons' and for 'children.' Parallelism (**fruit of the womb**) and the drift of the Psalm show that 'children' is what is here intended.

heritage: men receive children from Jehovah as they inherit property from their earthly fathers.

reward: the figure changes: children are also a reward; payment for uprightness of life.

4. children of youth: i. e. children born when the father is young: see Gen. xxxvii. 3, xlix. 3. Such children (sons especially) are able to protect their father when he is old (see verse 5).

5. that hath his quiver full of them = 'that has many children.' The figure 'arrows' of verse 4 is continued.

They shall not, &c.: **When they,** &c.: read, 'he' for 'they' in both cases, as LXX, Duhm; it is the 'father' who is spoken of, not the 'sons': he shall not be ashamed, i. e. be foiled in his purpose, when he speaks with his opponents at law.

in the gate: in the space before the gate of Eastern cities justice was dispensed and civic business transacted: see lxix. 12; Deut. xxi. 19.

To speak with enemies = to have a lawsuit: see Joshua xx. 4.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Theme. The god-fearing man is blessed in his work and in his family.

I. *Contents.* (1) The prosperity of him who fears Jehovah (verses 1–3).

(2) He will have Jehovah's benediction and see the prosperity of Jerusalem and of his own family (verses 4–6).

That walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: 2
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts 3
of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants, round about thy table.
Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed 4

II. *Authorship and Date.* The remarks made on Ps. cxxvii in this connexion apply here.

1–3. *He who fears Jehovah has prosperity in his daily occupation and in his home.*

1. Blessed: i. e. happy, fortunate, referring not to the character nor even to the feelings, but to the outward life; his lot is a privileged one, having wealth and children: see lxxxiv. 4.

2. Here the second person is introduced, but in a kind of impersonal way.

This verse is quoted in *Pirqe Aboth*, iv. 3 (Taylor).

labour: the fruit of the labour. To **eat** means 'to enjoy,' have the benefit of.

3. fruitful vine: the *tertium quid* is fruitfulness, not gracefulness or dependence.

in the innermost parts of thine house: the woman's appartment in the tent or the house was farthest away from the main entrance. When the family was poor and could afford but a one-roomed house a portion was separated by a curtain for the wife's use. The harem and the compulsory veil are institutions of Islam[1].

olive plants: emblems of freshness and vigour: see lii. 8; Jer. xi. 16, &c.

table: the tables used at present in Palestine in both tents and houses are small round ones standing about a foot high above the ground. During a meal the participants sit on the ground around the table, leaning on one side. In Bible times the table was probably of the same character: see Gen. xviii. 1 f.; Judges vi. 19.

In the picture of the home the mother does not seem to have her place with the children at the table: nor indeed the father. But it is not denied in the Psalm that both the parents sat with the children. In this ideal home monogamy is the practice assumed.

4–6. *This god-fearing man will have Jehovah's benediction.*

4. blessed: a different word from that so translated in verse 1;

[1] See Hastings' *D. B.*, 'Veil' (by the present writer).

That feareth the LORD.

5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion:
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children.
Peace be upon Israel.

129 A Song of Ascents.

1 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up,

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there it = 'happy': here the English word has its literal sense 'bless-ed' of Jehovah. But those whom Jehovah **blesses** are 'happy': see on cxviii. 26.

5 f. Render: 'May Jehovah bless thee from Zion (where He dwells) So that thou mayest enjoy gazing upon the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of thy life, And so that thou mayest see thy children's children,' &c.

5. And thou shalt see: in Hebrew the imperative is used, but in accordance with Hebrew usage after another imperative it expresses purpose: cf. 'Do this and live' = 'Do this that thou mayest live.' 'See' is followed by the preposition *b* = 'on' or 'upon': in Hebrew 'to see' or 'look on' = 'to feast one's eyes on,' 'to gaze on with delight': see on cxii. 8. In verse 5 the verb 'see' takes the accusative direct, and therefore retains its strict meaning.

PSALM CXXIX.

Theme. Israel, protected by Jehovah in the past, imprecates vengeance upon her oppressors.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel oppressed and tortured in the past, but delivered by God (verses 1–4).

(2) Imprecations on the nation's foes (verses 5–8).

This Psalm and Ps. cxxiv have much in common, alike in form and in matter. In both there are two strophes, the first celebrating God's protection of Israel in the past. The second line in both is identical, 'Let Israel now say': and in both the first line is repeated.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See what is said of Ps. cxxiv in this connexion.

The deliverance from Babylon is usually thought to have given rise to both Psalms.

1–4. *Israel oppressed, but delivered.*

1. Many a time: one word in Hebrew, meaning here probably 'much' or 'greatly.' In cxxiii. 4 it is translated 'exceedingly'

Let Israel now say;
Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up: 2
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
The plowers plowed upon my back; 3
They made long their furrows.
The LORD is righteous: 4
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

(filled), in lxv. 10 'abundantly,' but in cxx. 6 'long' (=for a long time). 'Much have they afflicted me,' &c.

my youth up: Israel's bondage period in Egypt is often spoken of as 'her youth'; see Hos. xi. 1; Jer. ii. 2, &c.

Let Israel, &c.: see cxxiv. 1.

2. Render: 'They have afflicted me much from my youth up: Yea, they have prevailed against me.'

Many a time, &c.: repeated from verse 1: cf. cxxiv. 1 f.

Yet they have, &c.: the Hebrew word rendered **Yet** never has that meaning: it is often climactic in sense, meaning 'yea,' 'moreover.' The negative (*lo*) in this verse is simply a dittograph of *li* (=against me) at the end of the verse: it was first reduplicated by mistake, and then spelt differently to give it sense. With the change thus introduced the first part of the Psalm is consistent.

3. Our oppressors have so lashed us with their whips that our backs are marked like ploughed fields. The courbache, or whip, is in constant use in Egypt and Palestine at the present time. The nation speaks here, as often, in the first person: see p. 20 ff. For the same metaphor see Isa. li. 23 and cf. Mic. iii. 12; Isa. li. 6.

They made long their furrows: in Arabic the word cognate to the Hebrew for 'furrow' means 'a strip of land ploughed in one journey,' then 'a single furrow the length of the ploughed field.' So at least says Delitzsch, depending on Wetstein: but the Arabic Lexicons of Freytag, Lane, Dozy, and (Arabic only) Khowri do not give that meaning. The general sense is, however, clear: 'They make long furrows.'

4. The figure is changed. In verse 3 Israel is a ploughed field. Here the nation is compared to an ox controlled by its master's yoke. The reference seems to be to the bondage of Egypt, in which the Israelites were like yoked oxen.

cords of the wicked: the word translated 'cords' occurs in ii. 3 for the 'bands of captivity,' but in Job xxxix. 10 for the rope or yoke which binds the ox to the plough. Jehovah snapped these cords, and the nation became a nation of freedmen.

5 Let them be ashamed and turned backward,
All they that hate Zion.
6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops,
Which withereth afore it groweth up:
7 Wherewith the reaper filleth not his hand,
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.
8 Neither do they which go by say,
The blessing of the LORD be upon you;
We bless you in the name of the LORD.

5-8. *Imprecations on the foes of Israel.* On such prayers for evil see Introd. to Ps. cix.

5. Let them be, &c.: that we have in this and the following verses real prayers for the undoing of Israel's foes, and not merely expressions of faith in the future, would hardly have been doubted by any except for apologetic reasons.

ashamed: i. e. disappointed, foiled in their ends; see the next word, **turned backward.**

Zion: here the nation; see Additional Note, p. 368.

6. as the grass, &c.: the reference is to the seed blown by the spring winds on to the flat parapeted roofs of Eastern houses. Such grass seed finds refuge, especially in corners and crevices, and begins to grow; but it is burnt by the scorching sun before it flowers, so that no reaper is needed to cut it down and gather it in; see the next verse. The same figure occurs in Isa. xxxvii. 27.

afore it groweth up: *lit.* 'before it unsheaths itself,' then 'before it puts forth its flower.' Another rendering is allowed by the Hebrew: 'before one plucks it up' = 'before it is plucked up.' So LXX, and therefore, of course, the Vulg. (which in the Psalms follows it).

7. The representations on the Egyptian monuments show that the reaper used to hold his scythe with the right hand, laying hold with his left hand of what was cut, removing it out of the way. Behind him followed a man with a large girdled garment, which, above the girdle, had open folds, into which the grain or corn was placed: at intervals the latter was taken to be tied up into sheaves.

8. When any one passed reapers it seems to have been the custom to wish them God's blessing; see Ruth ii. 4.

We bless, &c.: the response of the reapers.

In the case of the field on the roof there would be no reapers to greet or to be greeted.

A Song of Ascents. **130**

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. 1
Lord, hear my voice:
Let thine ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.
If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, 3
O Lord, who shall stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee, 4
That thou mayest be feared.

PSALM CXXX.

Theme. Out of the depths the Psalmist prays for pardon and restoration.

I. *Contents.* (1) The cry of distress (verses 1–4).
(2) The expectation of forgiveness and deliverance (verses 5–8).
This is one of the so-called 'Penitential Psalms.' See on Ps. cii (*Contents*).

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm might well be a reflex of the distress felt during the opposition of the Samaritan party in the days of Nehemiah, but that is all that can be said as to the date of its composition.

1–4. *The cry of distress.*

1. Out of the depths: i. e. depths of water; see lxix. 2 f., 14; Isa. li. 10. Hebrew poets often compared a condition of distress to being overwhelmed with boisterous waves; see on cxxiv. 3.

have I cried: better, 'do I call': 'perfect of experience.'

2. attentive: the Hebrew word is found only here and in 2 Chron. vi. 40, vii. 15: cf. Neh. i. 6, 11.

the voice of, &c.: see xxviii. 2; 'my supplicating cries' gives the sense of the Hebrew.

3. LORD: Heb. Jah (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

mark (iniquities): *lit.* 'keep' or 'watch' as in verse 6 ('watchers,' 'keepers'): here 'take account of, in order to punish.' 'If thou shouldest act as watchman in reference to men's sins,' &c.

stand: i. e. stand the test of being judged; see i. 5 (same verb).

4. But: render, 'Surely.'

That, &c.: Jehovah forgives that men may be led to fear Him. The forgiveness here meant is deliverance from trouble which is its outward sign, and with which this Psalmist is chiefly concerned.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
6 My soul *looketh* for the Lord,
More than watchmen *look* for the morning;
Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.
7 O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD there is mercy,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
8 And he shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

131 A Song of Ascents; of David.

1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;

5-8. *Strong hope of pardon and restoration.*

5 f. Render: 'I wait for Jehovah, my soul' (=I myself) 'waits for His word' (='promise'). 'With my (whole) soul wait I on Jehovah: more than,' &c.

And (in his word): omit with LXX, Pesh., Targ., and connect **in his word** with the preceding verse (see translation).

do I hope: connect with next verse as in translation above; so LXX, Pesh., Targ., and most moderns.

6. watchmen: probably the city and not the temple watchmen are meant: see on cxix. 48.

7. O Israel, &c.: though the Psalmist is the mouthpiece of the nation throughout this Psalm and the preceding, he occasionally, as here, speaks as an individual, and, as such, addresses the nation.

redemption: Heb. *peduth*; see on lxxiv. 2.

8. And he: in Hebrew the pronoun is emphatic: 'And He—He,' &c.

PSALM CXXXI.

Theme. Profession of childlike humility.

I. *Contents:* see *Theme.* The Psalm is, as Baethgen says, a humble answer to the demand in Prov. xxiii. 26.

The speaker is an individual, and not the nation; otherwise the Psalm loses its charm, and the summons in verse 3 is senseless; but see on this verse.

The Psalm is a beautiful expression of trust and contentment: but, though a prayer seems implied, there is none expressed. Perhaps some of the verses have dropped out.

Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; 2
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.
O Israel, hope in the LORD 3
From this time forth and for evermore.

A Song of Ascents. 132

LORD, remember for David 1

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is no evidence as to the date of the Psalm.

1. The author does not explain what he means by the great matters which he once busied himself about: perhaps wealth, or high office in the state, or both. Suffering has subdued his lofty aspirations: he is now content with what Jehovah allots him. Sir. iii. 18 f. expands the thought of this verse.

exercise myself in: Heb. 'walk with,' 'to have to do with,' as with people we walk or live with; then, 'to busy oneself about.'

things too wonderful for me: 'things beyond my power to accomplish': see Deut. xvii. 8, xxx. 11.

2. my soul: this is preferable to the A. V. in this place. The soul is often spoken of as the organ of appetite, of desire. The Psalmist has stilled (*lit.* 'levelled,' see Isa. xxviii. 25) and quieted (*lit.* 'silenced') the soul, which aforetime soared and clamoured after high things. Now the soul has lost this longing, just as a weaned child its desire for its mother's milk.

3. A liturgical addition such as we have in iii. 9, &c.

PSALM CXXXII.

Theme. Jehovah promises to hear the people's prayer and, for David's sake, to restore their fortunes.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel pleads with Jehovah that He may be faithful to the covenant made with David (verses 1–10).

(2) Jehovah answers the prayer by renewing the promises made to David and through him to the nation (verses 11–18).

There is a good deal of the dramatic element in the Psalm, and it is probable that its parts were sung by at least three different parties: verses 1–5 by a small section of the choir; verses 6–10 by a larger section; verses 11–18 being allotted to one individual, these verses containing the answer of Jehovah.

Ps. cxxxii differs from the other Pilgrim Psalms in its metre and

All his affliction;
2 How he sware unto the LORD,

matter, and also in its greater length. It is commonly thought, for these reasons, to stand outside the group.

This Psalm contains much that is reminiscent of Ps. lxxxix: see on that Psalm (*Contents*). In both there is the same intense longing for the fulfilment of the promise involved in the covenant made with David and his seed (2 Sam. vii). But in Ps. lxxxix there seems no sign of the early fulfilment of the promise. Here the words assigned to Jehovah (verses 11–18) seem to indicate that the promise has begun to be realized, though the early part of the Psalm shows that much of that promise remains unfulfilled. The nation is still dissatisfied, longing for what it has not. Perhaps some recent act of oppression on the part of the Persian or Syrian government prompted the Psalm.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Verses 8–10 are almost identical with the closing words of Solomon's dedicatory prayer recorded in 2 Chron. v. 41 f.: it has been therefore argued that Solomon composed the present Psalm to be sung at the dedication of the temple which he built, when the ark was taken into the *debir* or most holy place. But modern scholars agree that the Chronicler has borrowed from this Psalm. In the older and more purely historical books of Kings the words are not found. Moreover, the national distress and subjection implied in the Psalm do not suit the age of Solomon. The dependence of the Psalm on the post-exilic account of Jehovah's covenant with David (2 Sam. vii)[1] proves that the Psalm was written after the Exile, though whether in the time of Nehemiah or in the Maccabean age cannot be decided: see on verses 4 f., 10.

1–10. *The people's prayer grounded on the covenant with David.*

1. The prayer. Jehovah is entreated for the sake of David's merits to help the nation at this crisis. The doctrine that God will show favour to people on account of the merits of their ancestors was elaborated to a high degree in later Judaism[2]. It passed from Judaism into Roman Catholicism.

The form of expression in the present verse seems based on Neh. v. 19; xiii. 14, 22, 31, an argument for a late date.

This verse should be translated: 'O Jehovah, remember with regard to David all his wearisome toiling' (in connexion with Thy house).

All his affliction: the Hebrew means here 'his being hard worked.' The reference is to what David *did* in connexion with

[1] See on Psalm lxxxix, Introd.

[2] Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 292 ff.

And vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, 3
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes, 4
Or slumber to mine eyelids;
Until I find out a place for the LORD, 5
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.

---

the temple, and not to what he *suffered*. LXX has 'meekness,' Pesh. 'humility' for **affliction** here: but it is David's zeal for the building of the temple that is spoken of.

2–5. *David's vow to build a house for Jehovah.*

2. he sware: there is no record in the historical books of the O. T. of such a vow. We have here probably a later tradition.

Mighty One of Jacob: the phrase is found elsewhere only in verse 5, Gen. xlix. 24, and ('Israel' for 'Jacob') in Isa. i. 24. If the M. T. is followed the phrase means 'the Hero' or 'Defender of Jacob' (i. e. of the nation). But we should probably (with Barth, Stade, Cheyne, &c.) vocalize differently in all the passages, and render 'the Steer of Jacob' (or 'Israel'), i. e. the God whom Israelites worship as others do the steer. The Massorites seem to have varied the spelling (*'ābir* for *'ābbir*) to avoid any reference to steer-worship: cf. the M.T. vocalization of 'Molek' (the vowels of *boshet*) for 'Melek' (in the LXX and Pesh. Moloch).

3–5. *The contents of the oath or vow.*

3. tabernacle of my house: better, 'tent of my house,' i. e. the tent which is my house, 'genitive of apposition': see on cxviii. 15.

my bed: Heb. 'the couch of my bed,' or, 'the bed of my bed,' for both the Hebrew words denote 'bed.' Probably the first word is a marginal gloss which has crept into the text.

4. *Verbatim* from Prov. vi. 4; whence it has been seriously argued that Solomon, having written the one (?), must have written the other also! It is impossible to say which of the occurrences is the older, though Baethgen decides for Prov. vi. 4.

5. place: see 1 Chron. xv. 1. The ark was a symbol of the Divine presence: see on verse 8.

A tabernacle: *lit.* 'dwellings,' pl. 'of fullness,' i. e. the sanctuary with its enclosures and appendages. The Hebrew word in the singular (*Mishkan*) is the technical term in the Priestly Code for that elaborate tabernacle ornamented with tons of silver and gold which later Judaism regarded as the central sanctuary

6 Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah:
We found it in the field of the wood.
7 We will go into his tabernacles;
We will worship at his footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, into thy resting place;

---

during the wilderness life, its place being taken in J, E by *ohel*, a tent. The use of the word here favours a late date for the Psalm.

Mighty One of Jacob: render, 'Steer of Jacob': see on verse 2.

6 f. Here the people are dramatically represented as uttering the sentiments of David's contemporaries. They express their joy at what has taken place.

6. we heard of it: We found it: the pronoun 'it' can stand for nothing other than the ark, though the latter is not named before verse 8. The poet is so full of what he has his mind on that he forgets to name it, regardless of the needs of readers.

Ephrathah: a name given elsewhere to the district in which Beth-lehem lay: see Gen. xxxv. 16, 19, xlviii. 7; Ruth iv. 11; cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 12; Mic. v. 2. But the same name seems also to be used for the district in which Kirjath-jearim was situated. The word means 'fruitful' (region), and it might well be applied to more places than one. Delitzsch, Baethgen, and Duhm think that in Gen. xxxv. 16, 19, xlviii. 7 a third district more to the north must be intended.

field of the wood: better, 'the district of Jaar,' i.e. the neighbourhood of Kirjath-jearim (= 'city of the woods'); the word rendered 'fields' often = 'district.' It was at Kirjath-jearim that, in the house of Abinadab, the ark rested for many years (1 Sam. vii. 1 f.), until David removed it to Zion (1 Chron. xiii. 5 f.). It may be gathered from 1 Sam. vii. 1 f. that the ark was in the *neighbourhood* of Kirjath-jearim, and not in the city itself. This would well suit the theory that Ephrathah was the district embracing this city.

7. Render: 'Let us go into His dwelling place,
Let us worship at the footstool of His feet.'

go: Duhm reads 'bring (it).'

tabernacles: see on verse 5.

footstool: parallelism shows that it is the sanctuary that is meant by the word here as in xcix. 5 (see on), and not the ark.

8 f. The nation is made to speak as if it were present at the dedication of the temple by Solomon: see 1 Kings viii. In 2 Chron. vi. 41 f. verses 8–10 are introduced into Solomon's dedicatory prayer.

Thou, and the ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; 9
And let thy saints shout for joy.
For thy servant David's sake 10
Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
The LORD hath sworn unto David in truth; 11
He will not turn from it:
Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

---

8. Arise: an allusion to the watchword used when the ark in the wilderness was set forward: see Num. x. 33, 35.

resting place: the ark owed its origin to the belief that Jehovah was present in it in a very special sense. It was a later conception which made the ark the receptacle of the tables of the law. After the Exile the ark is never more referred to in the historical books.

the ark of thy strength: better (according to Hebrew idiom), 'Thy strong ark'; 'strong' because by its presence the Israelites were enabled to conquer their foes: see 1 Sam. v. 7, vi. 19 ff.; and on lxxviii. 61.

9 f. Duhm holds that the Psalmist borrows from the Chronicler: but that is because the contrary view, which even Cheyne (2) adopts, would destroy his theory of the very late date of the Psalm.

9. priests: neither David nor Solomon could have recognized a special order of priests.

'To put on righteousness' = 'to be righteous': see verse 16 and Job xxix. 4.

saints: better, 'favoured ones'; see vol. i. p. 360 f.

In verse 10 the people seem to utter their own prayer in their own language.

10. Turn not, &c.: to turn away the face from any one who makes a request is to send him away disappointed.

thine anointed: perhaps Zerubbabel is meant, or, likelier, one of the priest-kings of a later time.

11–18. *Jehovah's answer to the prayer of the people; an adaptation of the promise to David.*

11. The LORD hath sworn: nothing is said in 2 Sam. vii about God's making an oath to confirm this promise: see lxxxix. 3 and on verse 2 (**he sware**).

in truth: 'in faithfulness' (adv. acc.). He has made an oath intending to keep it faithfully. Or the Hebrew noun translated 'truth' may be the object after the verb: 'Jehovah has sworn . . .

12 If thy children will keep my covenant
And my testimony that I shall teach them,
Their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.
13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his habitation.
14 This is my resting place for ever:
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision:
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 Her priests also will I clothe with salvation:
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There will I make the horn of David to bud
I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

---

what is true,' 'what is certain of execution': so LXX, Baethgen, &c. This makes it easier to explain the pronoun in **from it.**

12. It is a condition of the fulfilment of the vow that David's descendants shall obey the Divine law: see 2 Sam. vii. 14; 1 Kings viii. 25. In lxxxix. 30 ff. man's faithlessness is not allowed to interfere with Jehovah's faithfulness to His promise.

children: read, 'sons.'

my testimony: render (with LXX, Targ.), 'my ordinances'; plural for singular, though the Hebrew is somewhat irregular.

13. Jehovah chose Zion before He chose David. He will, therefore, not forsake Zion and His chosen people, nor permit the succession of kings to fail: see lxxxix. 67 ff.

14. See verse 8 with which it corresponds as fulfilment to prayer.

15. The material needs of the people will be seen to.

bless: the word of blessing was believed to be effective in producing, obtaining: see on *Imprecatory Psalms*, p. 216, and also *Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Hebrews* by the present writer (pp. 32 ff.).

her provision: 'her' refers to Zion.

16 corresponds to verse 9: but deliverance takes the place of righteousness, a very common meaning of the latter word in Isa. xl f.

17. to bud: to spring forth: David will have horns grow, i.e. his horn will be exalted: he will prosper and be full of vigour. Concerning the exalting of the horn see on lxxv. 4, and cf. cxii. 9.

lamp: the burning of a lamp in the house is a sign of the

His enemies will I clothe with shame: 18
But upon himself shall his crown flourish.

A Song of Ascents; of David. **133**

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is 1
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

---

continuance and prosperity of the home (xviii. 29); see on cxix. 105, and cf. 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19.

18. clothe with shame: not with **righteousness** (verse 9), nor with **salvation** (verse 16).

himself: i. e. David. He is named here as representing his successors. They were in him, and promises made to him were made to them. The feeling of solidarity prevailed in the ancient world to a much greater extent than in our days; see on cix. 9–15.

his crown: the royal crown as representing the kingly office is obviously meant. LXX, Jero. read 'my crown,' i. e. the crown which, I Jehovah, have for David and his sons.

flourish: better, 'shall glitter.' Contrast what is said of the crown in lxxxix. 39.

Psalm CXXXIII.

Theme. The loveliness of brotherly fellowship.

I. *Contents*: see *Theme*. This Psalm stands in close connexion with Pss. cxxvii (2) and cxxviii: these last were written to celebrate the blessings of large families. This one sings the praise of good fellowship between the brothers of the same family.

During the three great festivals brothers of the same family came together from widely separated parts of the world. The intercourse at such reunions must have been unspeakably sweet.

Authorship and Date. One or two characteristics of late Hebrew suggest that the Psalm is a good deal later than the Exile, but nothing more can be said on this head.

1. Render: 'How fine and pleasant it is for brothers to sit together.'

good: the Hebrew word has much the same meaning as the Greek word *kalos*, which combines within it the ethical and aesthetical. 'Fine' seems the best English equivalent.

brethren: better, 'brothers.'

to dwell: the Hebrew means both 'to sit' and 'to dwell': the former suits best here.

together in unity: this is an attempt at rendering two Hebrew words which Driver translates 'also together.' The first of them (*gam* = 'also') is absent from the ancient versions,

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard;
That came down upon the skirt of his garments;
3 Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there the LORD commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

---

and in Hebrew it is almost impossible to translate it. Omitting this word we have remaining 'together,' the rest ('in unity') falling out. So Duhm.

2. The pleasant influence of this brotherly fellowship is likened to the fragrance of the oil which was poured on Aaron at his appointment to office: this oil would overflow on his beard and on the collar of his official robe; see Exod. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12, xxi. 10. The oil was sprinkled, not poured, in the case of other priests; see Exod. xxix. 21.

the precious oil: *lit.* 'the good oil,' i.e. according to Hebrew idiom, 'the best oil.' It is, of course, the perfumed anointing oil that is meant. D. H. Müller and Baethgen translate 'aromatic oil,' connecting the Hebrew word rendered 'precious' with an Arabic word denoting 'an aromatic root.'

That came down: it is the **beard** and not the **oil** that 'came down,' &c.: so the Hebrew accents. There should, therefore, be a mere comma after **Aaron's beard.**

skirt: Heb. 'mouth,' i.e. the opening in the high-priest's garment through which the head was pushed; see Exod. xxviii. 32, xxxix. 23; Job xxx. 18.

3. the dew of Hermon: for about half the year Palestine depends for its irrigation upon the dew, which descends so plentifully in the night that in the morning the land looks often as though a heavy shower had fallen. Hermon is noted for the abundance of the dew that falls on its slopes.

upon the mountains of Zion: a physical connexion between the dew of Hermon and that of Zion, alleged by many, does not exist in fact, and is not implied here. The dewy mist of Hermon has never been known to be carried to mount Zion, which is some 200 miles to the south. It is 'Hermon-like dew' that is meant, 'dew as of Hermon': copious, refreshing, fertilizing, as is the dew that falls on Hermon. There is nothing in the Hebrew to exclude this, and the sense requires it.

For there, &c.: the mention of Zion reminds the Psalmist

A Song of Ascents. **134**

Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the 1
LORD,
Which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, 2
And bless ye the LORD.

---

of the fact that the temple was on Zion (see Additional Note, p. 368), and God was thought in a special way to dwell and dispense blessings in that temple.

life for evermore: does this mean for the individual a life that is to be endless? In the light of the whole Psalter one may answer 'no.' In the temple Jehovah dispenses life for ever: it is His dispensing that is for evermore, and that too must be taken with the limitations imposed by the thing itself. 'For ever' in the O. T. has a relative sense, which has in each particular case to be separately investigated.

PSALM CXXXIV.

Theme. A holy greeting and its answer.

I. *Contents.* (1) A greeting addressed by the congregation to those who were conducting the nightly service of the temple (verses 1 f.).

(2) Reply of the leader of the temple ministrants (verse 3).

The Psalm seems to have been sung antiphonally, being divided as above.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm supplies no special criteria for an opinion as to its age and origin.

1 f. *Greeting of the congregation.*

1. servants of the LORD: the next clause shows that temple ministrants are meant, i. e. priests and Levites.

by night: therefore there were services in the temple at night: see 1 Chron. ix. 33.

stand in the house of the LORD: 'To stand before Jehovah' is a technical expression for the discharging of their official duties by the priests and Levites: Deut. x. 8; Heb. x. 11.

2. Lift up your hands: i. e. in prayer; see xxviii. 2, cxli. 2, &c.

to the sanctuary: the temple building, or house: here regarded as the *qiblah*, or the place towards which prayer should be directed; see on cxxi. 1 (**unto the mountains**).

3. The reply of the leader of the temple ministrants.

3 The LORD bless thee out of Zion;
Even he that made heaven and earth.

135 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise ye the name of the LORD;
Praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD:
2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD,
In the courts of the house of our God.
3 Praise ye the LORD; for the LORD is good:

(**The LORD bless**) **thee**: read 'you': or understand 'thee' distributively.

Even he that made, &c.: as in cxxi. 2[b] and cxxiv. 8[b].

PSALM CXXXV.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah on account of what He has in nature and in history revealed Himself to be.

I. *Contents.* The present Psalm is, like Pss. xcvii f. and cvii, a mosaic composed of extracts from other parts of the O. T. strung together for liturgical purposes. The following is the general order of thought:

(1) A summons to praise Jehovah (verses 1–4).

(2) Jehovah's power and sovereignty as made known in nature (5–7), and in the history of the nation (8–12) (verses 5–12).

(3) Jehovah's transcendence: the helplessness of heathen deities (verses 13–18).

(4) Summons to praise Jehovah (verses 19–21).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm is certainly a very late one, as is proved by its dependence on other Scriptures, and by several characteristics of late Hebrew.

1–4. *Summons to praise Jehovah.*

Bickell, Duhm, and Cheyne[(2)] separate verses 1 f. from the rest of the Psalm, making of these two verses a companion temple Psalm to Ps. cxxxiv: surely, however, for no good reason.

1 = cxiii. 1 with transposition of clauses.

Praise ye, &c.: belongs to the title and not to the Psalm: see 'Hallelujah Psalms,' pp. 226 f.

2. 2[a] = cxxxiv. 1[b].

2[b] added by mistake to cxxxiv. 1[b] in the LXX.

Those addressed include the lower officials of the temple, the Levites as well as the priests.

3. Praise ye the LORD: Heb. 'Hallelujah': elsewhere this

Sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.
For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, 4
And Israel for his peculiar treasure.
For I know that the LORD is great, 5
And that our Lord is above all gods.
Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that hath he done, 6
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.
He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the 7
earth;
He maketh lightnings for the rain;
He bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries.

---

expression occurs only in the Psalm title, though it occurs by mistake at the end of some Psalms.

for it is pleasant: better, 'for it (the name) is lovely,' i. e. God Himself as known is desirable; see liv. 6. Many explain 'it is pleasant to sing praises'; see cxlvii. 1.

4. Based on Deut. vii. 6, with a possible reference to Exod. xix. 5.

5-7. *Jehovah as seen in nature.*

5 f. These two verses are probably the utterances of two different scribes.

5. For I, &c.: better, 'For I—I know': the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew.

our Lord is above all gods: it is quite certain that, at all events in the religion of Israel before the Exile, the real existence of heathen gods was taken for granted: it was their power and wisdom in comparison with Jehovah, and their right to be recognized as gods, that was so stoutly denied: see Exod. xv. 11; Deut. iii. 24, x. 17; 1 Kings viii. 23; Isa. xix. 1, &c.

6. 6^a = cxv. 3^b.

6^b based on Exod. xx. 4.

deeps: the subterranean abysmal waters; see Introd. to Ps. civ: *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f.

7. From Jer. x. 13 (= li. 16).

the ends of the earth: from the sea which was thought to bound the earth; cf. 1 Kings xviii. 44.

lightnings for the rain: i. e. lightnings accompanying the rain. The preposition rendered 'for' (*l*) has the same force in Eccles. vii. 27. It was always a mystery to the ancients that fire and water seemed to come from the sky together, though the rain was not heated nor the fire extinguished.

8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
10 Who smote many nations,
And slew mighty kings;
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
And Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan:
12 And gave their land for an heritage,
An heritage unto Israel his people.
13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever;
Thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14 For the LORD shall judge his people,
And repent himself concerning his servants.

15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

8–12. *Jehovah's power revealed in history.*

9. into the midst of thee, O Egypt: an explanatory gloss: its omission is required by the rhythm: cf. cxvi. 19.

10–12. Cf. cxxxvi. 17–22.

10. many: this sense is supported by Deut. vii. 1. Hitzig and Delitzsch translate 'great.'

11. Amorites: the name stands here in its narrow sense for peoples living east of the Jordan.

12. an heritage: the repetition of this word is after the manner of the 'Royal' and 'Pilgrim Psalms' ('anadiplosis'): see on xciii. 4, and cf. xcvi. 13, xcviii. 13, cxxii. 2–4.

13–18. *Jehovah contrasted with idols.*

13. Based on Exod. iii. 15; see xxx. 4, cii. 12.

memorial: a synonym of **name** as in Hos. ii. 6. 'Jehovah as He is thought of,' i. e. as He is revealed (name). The Hebrew verb which usually means 'to remember' means primarily 'to think about.'

14. Cited word for word from Deut. xxxii. 36: cf. xc. 13. The **For** is suitable in the original connexion, but hardly so here: it is brought in with the quotation. We might render it here 'Surely.'

15–18. Taken from cxv. 4–8 with very few changes (see notes on).

The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not; 16
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not; 17
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
They that make them shall be like unto them; 18
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.
O house of Israel, bless ye the LORD: 19
O house of Aaron, bless ye the LORD:
O house of Levi, bless ye the LORD: 20
Ye that fear the LORD, bless ye the LORD.
Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, 21
Who dwelleth at Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: **136**

19-21. *All Israel summoned to praise Jehovah.* For the fourfold call here see on cxv. 9-11. In the latter the 'House of Levi' is omitted.

21. Blessed: i. e. virtually 'praised': see on lxxxiv. 5.

PSALM CXXXVI.

Theme: same as Ps. cxxxv.

I. *Title.* The LXX has 'Hallelujah' in the title.

II. *Contents.* (1) Summons to give thanks (verses 1-3).
(2) Jehovah's love and power in creation (verses 4-9).
(3) Jehovah's love and power in the history of Israel (verses 10-26).

The present Psalm is less original than even the preceding one, which it resembles. The refrain at the end of each verse confirms the impression that the Psalm was put together for liturgical purposes.

Verses 19-22 are an interpolation from Ps. cxxxv, and must be omitted. Without them we have as many verses as there are letters (consonants) in the Hebrew alphabet (see Introd. to Ps. cxxxix), and in verses 10-18 we have three triplets dealing in chronological order with as many episodes of Israel's life from Egypt to Canaan: (1) the departure from Egypt (verses 10-12);

For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 O give thanks unto the God of gods:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
3 O give thanks unto the Lord of lords:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
4 To him who alone doeth great wonders:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
5 To him that by understanding made the heavens:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
6 To him that spread forth the earth above the waters:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
7 To him that made great lights:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
8 The sun to rule by day:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
9 The moon and stars to rule by night
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

---

(2) the passage of the Red Sea (verses 13–15); (3) guidance and protection on the journey to Canaan (verses 16–18).

Milton's rendering of this Psalm ('Let us with a gladsome mind') was composed when the author was but fifteen years of age.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxxxv (*Authorship and Date*). In Jewish liturgies this Psalm has been called 'The Great Hallel': but this term has been variously understood; see pp. 226, 232.

1–3. *A call to give thanks.*

1 = cvi. 1 = cvii. 1 = cviii. 1.

2 f. from Deut. x. 17.

4–9. *Jehovah as creator.*

4. See lxxii. 18, lxxxvi. 10.

great wonders: better, 'great things'; the adjective (neut. pl.) means by itself 'great things': the other word is a marginal gloss, and rhythm requires its omission.

5. From Prov. iii. 19; Jer. x. 12.

6. Based on Isa. xlii. 5, xliv. 24.

the earth above the waters: see on cxxxv. 6.

7–9 follow Gen. i. 14–16.

9. and stars: omitted for metrical reasons by Bickell, &c.

To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn : 10
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And brought out Israel from among them : 11
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm : 12
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which divided the Red Sea in sunder : 13
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And made Israel to pass through the midst of it : 14
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea : 15
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which led his people through the wilderness : 16
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which smote great kings : 17
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And slew famous kings : 18
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
Sihon king of the Amorites : 19
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :

10–22. Almost word for word from cxxxv. 8–12, on which see notes.

13. divided: Heb. 'cut in two' : the same verb is used of cutting in two halves the child brought to Solomon for judgement, 1 Kings iii. 25.

in sunder: Heb. 'into segments' : the noun is cognate with the verb rendered 'divide,' and occurs in Gen. xv. 17.

15. The only verse in the O. T. which seems to give any countenance to the common belief that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was drowned in the Red Sea : but even this verse does not justify that belief.

overthrew: Heb. 'shook off' : the word is taken from Exod. xiv. 27, but in that, the original passage, Pharaoh is not mentioned. Baethgen omits in the present verse **his host**. In that case **Pharaoh** would mean 'the Egyptians' (the word in Exodus).

16. See Deut. viii. 15.

18. famous: read, 'mighty' as in cxxxv. 10.

19–22. Probably an addition from Ps. cxxxv ; see under *Contents*, p. 319.

20 And Og king of Bashan:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
21 And gave their land for an heritage:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
23 Who remembered us in our low estate:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
24 And hath delivered us from our adversaries:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
25 He giveth food to all flesh:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

137 By the rivers of Babylon,

---

21. their land: whose? A verse has clearly dropped out, viz. that corresponding to the third line (*stichos*) in cxxxv. 11, 'And all the kingdoms of Canaan.' It is the land belonging to these kingdoms that is meant here as in cxxxv. 12.

22. Israel his servant: in cxxxv. 12 'Israel his people': see Isa. xli. 8, &c.

23-26. *Jehovah as deliverer and as universal provider.*

23. in our low estate: 'whenever our fortunes were low.' There is no specific reference to the bondage in Egypt, or to the captivity in Babylon.

24. delivered us: the third verb we have met in the Psalter having the sense 'deliver': see on lxxiv. 2, where the three words are differentiated. The root meaning of the present Hebrew verb, as of its Arabic cognate (*faraqa*), is 'to cut away,' then 'to separate,' and at length 'to set free from bondage,' and the like.

25. all flesh: i. e. all Jews: the Psalm never steps outside the national bounds.

the God of heaven: so Ezra i. 2; Neh. i. 4, ii. 4; see on cxxiii. 1 and Introd. to Ps. civ, 'Hebrew Cosmology.'

Verse 26 rounds off the Psalm by repeating the words with which it opens.

PSALM CXXXVII.

Theme. Love of Zion and hatred of her foes.

There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof 2
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs, 3

I. *Contents.* (1) The exiled Jews requested by the Babylonians to sing and play (verses 1–3).

(2) The Jews' refusal and its reason (verses 4–6).

(3) Vengeance invoked on Babylon and Edom, the foes of Zion (verses 7–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm was written long enough after the Babylonian Exile to permit the suffering of that Exile to become the subject of meditation and song. The writer was probably led to sing this song because he and his compatriots were passing through an experience comparable with that of their ancestors in Babylon. Whether it is the ill-treatment of the Samaritan party or of the Syrian party of a later time the Psalm itself does not enable us to determine. Dillmann (in class) maintained that Isa. lxv f. and the present Psalm are products of the Exile itself and of the same set of circumstances.

1–3. *The Jews in Babylon asked to sing.* The perfect tense of the verb shows that the scene described belongs to past days.

1. rivers of Babylon: i. e. canals such as covered Babylon: perhaps the tributaries of the Euphrates are also included. Alongside one of these coolness and solitude were likely to be found.

sat down: sitting on the ground was a common posture for mourners; see Job ii. 8; Isa. iii. 26, xlvii. 1, 5.

Perhaps the reference is to synagogues built along river banks, where water for purification would be within reach; see Acts xvi. 13, and Joseph. *Antiq.* xiv. 10. 23; see on lxxiv. 8.

2. willows: render, 'poplars'; these last abound in Babylon.

(in the midst) thereof: i. e. of Babylon.

We hanged up, &c.: Wellhausen asks, Why then did they not leave their harps at home? The answer is that they needed them to accompany their Psalm-singing with. They refused to sing, and hung up their harps simply because they were unwilling to sing their songs of prayer and praise for the mere amusement of their heathen captors, who had unexpectedly come upon them: see verse 3.

harps: render, 'lyres'; see Introd. p. 28.

3. For: introducing the reason why they hanged up their harps and refused to sing.

songs: *lit.* 'words or things' (i. e. instances) 'of songs'; so = 'some songs'; see on cv. 27, where the same idiom occurs.

And they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song
In a strange land?
5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her cunning*.
6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.
7 Remember, O LORD, against the children of Edom
The day of Jerusalem;

The Babylonians asked the exiles to give them 'some songs'; they would hardly ask for the words without the music.

they that wasted us: read (changing one consonant) 'they that plundered us,' i. e. robbed us of our country: so Pesh., Targ., the LXX, and most moderns. Other readings have been proposed.

mirth: LXX 'a hymn': some such word is required by the parallelism. Probably we should read *mismor* ('a Psalm').

songs of Zion: temple songs, such as the Psalter contains.

4-6. *The Jews refuse to sing.*

4. the LORD'S song: i. e. one made for the temple and for the feasts and fasts connected with it, and not intended to be sung in any foreign land. But the answer proves inconsistency, for these Jews had brought their harps with them because they intended to sing some of Jehovah's songs, and the request itself was made because they had been heard singing such songs. The answer may mean: 'How can we, driven from our own home, be expected to sing songs of gladness in a foreign land?'

5. forget: read, 'wither,' transposing the Hebrew consonants; so Graetz, &c.

6. If I prefer not, &c.: render: 'If I put not Jerusalem above the principal things I rejoice in.'

7-9. *Vengeance invoked on Edom and Babylon.* 'The coals of fire which this Psalmist scatters among Israel's foes are not those which Christ's servants are bidden to heap on their enemies' heads' (Alex. McLaren).

7. Remember . . . against: i. e. remember with a view to punishing; see Neh. vi. 14, xiii. 29.

The day of Jerusalem: i. e. the day when Jerusalem was

Who said, Rase it, rase it,
Even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed; 8
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones 9
Against the rock.

A Psalm of David. **138**

I will give thee thanks with my whole heart: 1
Before the gods will I sing praises unto thee.

---

destroyed; see xxxvii. 13; Obad. 12. Cf. 'the day of Jehovah' in Amos. Among the Arabs 'day' stands for 'battle,' &c.

Rase it: *lit.* 'Lay it bare,' i. e. of its houses and inhabitants; see Hab. iii. 13.

8. that art to be destroyed: the Hebrew participle can be so read: but it is better to change one vowel and to read, 'thou devastator': so Sym., Pesh., Targ., Baethgen, &c.

Psalm CXXXVIII.

Theme. Thanks for Jehovah's lovingkindness and faithfulness.

I. *Title.* Pss. cxxxviii–cxlv are all, in the title, connected with the name 'David.' Probably these Davidic Psalms were once united with those in the earlier books to form a David hymn-book.

II. *Contents.* (1) Thanksgiving to Jehovah for His love and constancy (verses 1–3).
(2) Prediction that all earth's kings will worship Him (verses 4–6).
(3) Confident hope for the future (verses 7 f.).

III. *Authorship and Date.* The expectation that all kings will acknowledge Jehovah is one of which no pre-exilic portion of the O. T. shows any trace. The present Psalmist seems to betray acquaintance with Pss. xxii. 28, cii. 15 f.; Isa. xl ff. and Zech. viii. 23: this fact and some peculiarities of style stamp the Psalm as a late one: it may well be Maccabean.

1–3. *Thanksgiving to Jehovah.*

1. 1^a is virtually the same as ix. 1.

I will give thee: add, 'O Jehovah,' with the ancient versions. After 1^a the LXX adds, 'For thou hast heard the words of my mouth,' no doubt a dittograph (adapted) from verse 4.

gods: LXX 'angels,' suggesting a reading 'kings,' which in

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple,
And give thanks unto thy name for thy lovingkindness
and for thy truth:
For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
3 In the day that I called thou answeredst me,
Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul.
4 All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O LORD,
For they have heard the words of thy mouth.

---

the Hebrew is written almost exactly like 'angels.' 'Before kings' suits the context admirably (see verse 4), and is probably to be read: see on cxix. 46. 'gods,' if retained, would mean the idols introduced into Jerusalem by the Syrians. Even before them would the Psalmist praise Jehovah.

2. toward thy holy temple: see on cxxi. 1.

truth: better, 'faithfulness.'

thou hast magnified, &c.: the Hebrew means: 'Thou hast fulfilled thy promise in a way exceeding what our knowledge of thee led us to expect.'

word: the Hebrew term often means 'promise.'

name: revealed, and therefore known character.

It is better, however, to read for **thy word** 'thy faithfulness' (so Graetz), and for **thy name** 'thy heavens' (Hupfeld), rendering: 'Thou hast magnified thy faithfulness above all thy heavens.' The changes needed in Hebrew for this are not great, but the improvement in the sense is considerable. For the phrase 'above the heavens' see lvii. 5, 11, cviii. 5: cf. cviii. 4, cxiii. 4; and for the meaning of the phrase see on cviii. 5. 'To magnify faithfulness' is to show it on a large scale.

3. Thou didst encourage me, &c.: read with Jero., 'Thou hast enlarged me in my soul with strength.' The change in Hebrew involves the altering of one letter for another exceedingly like it. The verb obtained occurs in xviii. 36. In xc. 10 there is a similar change in a noun ('extent' for 'pride'). The verb in the M.T. in the present clause can mean only 'to make arrogant' or 'proud,' or something akin to this. The LXX, Pesh., and Targ. read, 'Thou madest me great,' as in the M.T. of xviii. 35. 'To enlarge with strength' = 'to give one the feeling of freedom and strength.'

4-6. *Prediction that all earth's kings will worship Israel's God.*

4. For they have heard: render: 'When they have heard,' &c.

Yea, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD; 5
For great is the glory of the LORD.
For though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto 6
the lowly:
But the haughty he knoweth from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; 7
Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of
mine enemies,
And thy right hand shall save me.
The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: 8
Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever;
Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. **139**

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. 1

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5. ways: His methods of dealing with men, as in ciii. 7.

6. yet hath he respect unto: Heb. 'yet sees He.' The R.V. translates from the LXX.

Jehovah is not too high to be concerned about the lowly: note the word-play.

he knoweth: read (with Duhm), 'He cuts down,' i. e. He destroys: the change in the Hebrew text is but slight.

7 f. *His confidence for the future.*

7. trouble: *lit.* 'straitness,' then 'distress'; see on cvii. 6.

thou wilt revive me: better, 'thou wilt keep me alive.' This is the sense here, though the Hebrew yields either: see on cxix. 25. Jehovah will not allow the Psalmist's foes to compass his death; see next clause.

8. The LORD will perfect, &c.: i.e. He will carry out His purpose for me completely. It is better, however, to read (with LXX, Targ., &c.) 'recompenses me,' changing the final letter of the verb for another resembling it, as most moderns do in lvii. 2. See on cxvi. 7, where the verb thus obtained occurs.

works: render, 'work,' though the Hebrew can mean either. Israel is what is intended.

PSALM CXXXIX.

Theme. Jehovah's omniscience and omnipresence.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's omniscience shown by the knowledge He has of man's outward and inward life (verses 1–6).

(2) Jehovah's omnipresence illustrated (verses 7–12).

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
3 Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
4 For there is not a word in my tongue,

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(3) Explanation of Jehovah's concern for man—He created him (verses 13-18).

(4) The writer's hatred of the wicked, and his prayer that Jehovah may slay them (verses 19-24).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Aramaisms with which the Psalm abounds, and the speculative spirit pervading it, suggesting Greek influence, unite in showing that the Psalm is a late one, not improbably a product of the Maccabean age, during which Greek culture had much vogue in Palestine.

Ibn Ezra described this Psalm as the 'Crown of the Psalter,' and Reuss would have thought as highly of it were it not for the 'damning' section, verses 19-24. If this section is, however, a genuine part of the Psalm, it is probably an addition suggested by the contrast between the beauty of God's natural world and the moral deformity due to sin. Without it we have twenty-two verses left (so Ps. cxxxvi, omitting verses 19-22), as many as there are letters (consonants) in the Hebrew alphabet: it becomes thus, in a secondary way, an alphabetic acrostic Psalm as Lam. v (cf. Ps. cxxxvi)—an argument for treating these verses as an interpolation.

1-6. *God's omniscience.*

1. searched: see verse 23; Jer. xvii. 10: and cf. Ps. xvii. 3.

(**known**) *me*: the pronoun 'me' is found in the ancient versions, and must be restored in the M. T., since the rhythm as well as the sense requires it.

2. Thou knowest: 'thou' in the Hebrew is emphatic: 'thou —thou knowest.'

my downsitting and mine uprising: i. e. 'my entire life'; see cxxvii. 2; Deut. vi. 6.

my thought: the original word here is Aramaic; it occurs nowhere else in the O. T. except in verse 17, where the plural is used: its strict meaning is 'inclination,' 'disposition,' 'wish.'

afar off: see cxxxviii. 6.

3. Thou searchest out: Heb. 'winnowest,' 'siftest.' The Jewish exegetes connect with a noun = 'circlet,' 'border,' and render as A. V., 'Thou compassest.' Duhm connects with a noun = 'span,' and translates, 'Thou hast measured (in spans)' or 'measured out.'

my path: Heb. 'my going,' which suits **my lying down.**

But, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before, 5
And laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; 6
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit? 7
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: 8
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning, 9
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me, 10
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, 11

5. beset me: 'hemmed me in': the verb is used to describe the action of an army besieging a town, 'Thou hast besieged me—there is no escaping from thee.'

6. *Such* knowledge, &c.: i. e. the knowing on my part of what thou knowest; not the knowledge which is in thee.

7–12. *Jehovah's omnipresence.*

7. God's **spirit** and His **presence** (*lit.* 'face') mean 'God Himself.' In post-Biblical Hebrew 'face' (*Panim*) became one of the many names for God.

8. See Job xvii. 13b, xxvi. 5f.; Isa. lviii. 5; Jer. xxiii. 24; Amos ix. 2.

If I ascend, &c.: as Enoch or Elijah.

If I make my bed in Sheol: *Sheol* = Hades, regarded as the land of rest: see on lxxxvi. 13, and see pp. 15ff.

9. wings of the morning: to the ancients (Semites, Greeks, Romans, &c.) the goddess of the dawn had wings with which she arose out of the Eastern ocean, and, in the course of the day, covered the whole sky. The Psalmist makes a happy use of this imagery, without in the least compromising his monotheism.

sea: the one sea known to the Hebrews was the Mediterranean. Hence the word came to mean, as here, the west: 'though like the dawn he should travel from east to west,' &c.

11 f. Render: 'And if I should say only let darkness cover me And the light about me be night, (12) Even the darkness darkens not from thee, But the night gives forth light as (does) the day.'

11. overwhelm: the Hebrew word (so LXX) occurs in Gen.

And the light about me shall be night;
12 Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike *to thee.*
13 For thou hast possessed my reins:
Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
14 I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made:
Wonderful are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.

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iii. 15, and means 'to bruise.' Making a slight change we obtain the suitable sense 'cover,' 'overwhelm' (with its old meaning).

12. Verse 11 gives the protasis or supposition, the present verse the apodosis or result. Verse 11[b] has been wrongly explained as containing the apodosis to verse 11[a], verse 12 simply continuing it.

shineth: better, 'puts forth light'; though the Hebrew can mean either.

13–18. *Jehovah's power and wisdom manifested in man's creation.*

Verses 13 f. should (with Hitzig, &c.) be transposed.

13. For: if this verse is kept in its present position the **For** implies that God knows all about man because He created him. But creatorship could not, as such, account for omnipresence. Better render 'Surely': but, best of all, change the order of verses 13 f.

possessed: better, 'formed,' this is the primary sense of the verb. See on lxxiv. 2, where the same verb is properly rendered 'purchased.' Dillmann's word in class (1892) was '*bereitet*' = 'prepared.'

reins: 'kidneys,' the supposed seat of the emotions: see on lxxiii. 2. Here, however, the internal organs in general seem to be embraced. The creation of man was to the ancients, as it well might be to their children, a profound mystery: see Job x 8–11.

covered: rather as R.Vm., 'knit me together.' The thought is of the interlacing of bones, sinews, and muscles: see Job x. 11.

14. I will give thanks, &c.: better, 'I give thanks.'

for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: so the M.T. and Dillmann (in class). But it is better (with most ancient authorities and also most moderns) to read and render: 'for thou art fearfully wonderful.'

my soul = 'myself': see on lxxviii. 18.

My frame was not hidden from thee, 15
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, 16
And in thy book were all *my members* written,

---

15. frame: read (changing one vowel), 'my bone,' in the sense of 'I myself.' The word 'bone' stands for the entire personality in vi. 3 and xxxv. 10, in both which passages as well as in the present verse 'bone' and 'soul' are in parallelism and denote the person. See also Prov. iii. 8, xiv. 30, &c., and on lxxviii. 18.

made in secret: see Job i. 21; Sir. xl. 1.

curiously wrought: the Hebrew word means 'embroidered with threads of different colours.' The reference seems to be to the red vein marks on the body. The idea of weaving as well as that of variegated colours lies in the root.

in the lowest parts of the earth: i. e. the womb. Gunkel says Sheol is meant, holding that here and in Job i. 21 the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is taught. But in the present verse it is the body that is specially spoken of, and this is formed in the womb. The poet compares the womb to Sheol, describing it in similar terms (see lxiii. 9; Isa. xliv. 23), because it is so remote from light and general knowledge. The doctrine in question is, however, taught in Wisdom viii. 20: cf. Verg. *Aen.* vi. 713 ff., 884.

16. Render: 'Thy eyes saw my imperfect substance, And in thy book were all of them written (viz.) Days which were sketched out, Though (as yet) there was not one of them for me.'

unperfect substance: the one Hebrew word thus translated (*golem*) denotes 'an undeveloped embryo,' and in post-Biblical Hebrew, which has it often, its meaning is 'an unshaped mass,' 'an unfinished vessel' (of metal, &c.). It is a quite different word that is rendered 'substance' in verse 15, though, in the A.V., 'substance' is the rendering of both words.

book: God has a book in which He records the tears of His suffering people (lvi. 8), and wherein are written the names of those who are to be kept alive (lxix. 28). Here the days marked out for the life of the undeveloped substance are written. Before a man is born God has written down the exact number of days he has to live. Of course the language is poetical. No one would infer from Ps. lvi. 8 that the Psalmist wished God to examine one of those Roman tear-bottles, so common throughout the Roman world, which he—the Psalmist—had filled with his own tears!

Among the Babylonians also the doctrine of predestination was conveyed through the imagery of a god (Nabu = Nebo) writing

Which day by day were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them.
17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.
19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:

---

on books or tablets the lives which men are to live. But in Babylonian mythology it is connected with magic[1]. The same conception played a large part in later Judaism; see 4 Ezra (Apoc.) xiv. 50; Enoch (Ethiopian version) xii. 3 f., xv. 1, xc. 1; Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, 15, xxi. 27.

were all *my members* written: the word 'members' in the E.VV. refers to the members which were to arise out of the embryo: but the word is not in the Hebrew, and we must Aramaic-wise seek the subject of the verb in the next clause. There is no need to change the text as Duhm does.

When as yet, &c.: so the *keth.*: the unnecessary correction of the Massorites (*qr.*) would read 'and for it' (i. e. the **imperfect substance**) 'there was one' ('day to be born,' see Job iii. 1) 'among them.' I find that in at least three cases out of four the *keth.* is preferable to the *qr.* or correction of the Massorites.

The words 'for me' (**unto me**), which in the Heb. begin verse 17, must be attached to verse 16, omitting the 'and' (**also**).

17. How precious: better, 'How weighty' (so the Aramaic cognate). God's thoughts can neither be weighed nor numbered.

thoughts: see on verse 2.

sum: Heb. 'sums,' pl. of fullness: 'the large sum of them.'

In the LXX the verse is thus rendered: 'These friends' (same consonants as **thoughts**), 'O God, were greatly honoured by me: Their principalities were made very strong.'

19–24. *The Psalmist's abhorrence of wicked men, and his prayer that Jehovah may exterminate them.* The creation-song in Ps. civ has a similar ending (see civ. 35). If we remove the section altogether the rest of the Psalm makes a complete and charming poem. Verses 19–24 may have been tacked on for liturgical purposes in a time of bitter (Syrian?) persecution; see on Ps. cix (Introd.) concerning 'Vindictive Psalms.'

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[1] See *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], pp. 405 f. (Zimmern).

Depart from me therefore, ye bloodthirsty men.
For they speak against thee wickedly, 20
And thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.
Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? 21
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
I hate them with perfect hatred: 22
I count them mine enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart: 23
Try me, and know my thoughts:

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19. Render: 'Oh that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God, And that murderers' (*lit.* 'men of blood') 'would depart from me.'

Depart: the smallest of the Hebrew consonants (*yodh*) has fallen out from the beginning of the verb. We must restore and connect the imperfect thus obtained with 19^a as a continuation of the wish: so most moderns.

20. Render: 'For they rebel against thee (though) in a scheming way: Thy enemies hate (thee, though) to no purpose.'

they speak: read, 'they rebel,' changing one vowel. Hebrew grammar as well as sense requires this.

wickedly: Heb. 'according to plan, or purpose.' They rebel, but they do it wisely; i. e. they hide from public view their true spirit.

thine enemies: the word in the M.T. means in Hebrew 'thy cities': in Aramaic (see Dan. iv. 16) 'thy enemies.' The first word in the verse (='For') has an Aramaic meaning.

take *thy name* in vain: the Hebrew is simply 'take to no purpose,' which is senseless, though some read 'thy name' for **thine enemies.** I propose 'hate (thee),' rearranging the consonants and adding a vowel. A Hebrew scholar will see how the following Hebrew word would cause the disorder of the M.T. in the present word.

in vain: their scheming ends in no advantage to themselves: the net result is—'nothing' (so the Hebrew).

21. am not I grieved: R.Vm. is nearer the Hebrew and otherwise preferable: 'do I not loathe.'

23 f. The Psalmist seems afraid that his maledictions are not quite in accord with the eternal way into which he prays to be led. But his prayer reveals a sincere desire to think and feel and say the thing that is right.

23. thoughts: not the Hebrew word so translated in verses 2, 17: the word used here means 'thoughts that go in different directions,' 'meditations,' 'deliberations,' 'plannings.' It is the

24 And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

140 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man;

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same word that occurs in Job iv. 13, xx. 21, only here the word has a letter inserted (*r*) which is inserted also in other Semitic words. The root idea is 'to divide.' In Ezek. xxxi. 5 the noun = 'branches': here it = 'branched thoughts.' See Matt. vi. 25, where 'be not anxious' = (*lit.*) 'be not distracted.'

24. We have here the conception of the two ways which meets us in many literatures. The soul at death has often been described as coming to a place whence two ways diverge, the one leading to bliss, the other to woe. The 'Choice of Hercules' recalls a legend in which two ways were placed before that Greek hero for his choice, the way of pleasure, and that of virtue. Christ speaks of the 'broad' and 'the narrow way,' and religion has been spoken of as 'a way': see Jer. xxi. 8. Cf. the twin paths of the *Didache*.

way of wickedness: *lit.* 'way of pain,' i. e. the way which leads to pain: see Jer. xxi. 8; so most moderns, including Dillmann (in class). The same Hebrew letters denote both 'idol' and 'pain.' The Targ. therefore renders 'the way of idolatry,' and the Pesh. 'the false way.'

the way everlasting: i. e. the way which leads to prolongation of life in the present world: cf. the contrast in i. 6.

According to the Targ. (so Olshausen, &c.) the sense is the 'way of old,' i. e. the good old way trodden by pious patriarchs, prophets, and saints of past days: see Jer. vi. 16, xviii. 15. Parallelism supports the former interpretation.

There is no reference here to the life beyond death; the word rendered 'everlasting' having always a relative meaning to be determined from the context: see on cxix. 44, cxxi. 8: see Introd., pp. 14 ff.

There is in this verse a mixture of figures. The 'painful way' is something *in a man* which leads him to choose that which issues in pain: the 'everlasting way' is one in which a man has to walk if he will have length of life.

Psalms CXL—CXLIII.

Most moderns, since Ewald's time, group these Psalms, referring them to the same period and making them voice the sufferings of faithful Jews due to the bitter and treacherous persecutions of the Syrian party, i. e. to the party that was made up of Syrian rulers in Palestine, and renegade Jews in league with them. These

Preserve me from the violent man:
Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; 2
Continually do they gather themselves together for war.
They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent; 3
Adders' poison is under their lips. [Selah

four Psalms lean much on other parts of the O.T., though there is also much in them that is original. They have many resemblances of vocabulary and style. It is an individual that speaks in them all, though the feelings he utters were shared by his fellows.

PSALM CXL.

Theme. Prayer for protection against malignant and treacherous foes.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to be defended against violent and deceitful foes (verses 1–5).

(2) Prayer that the enemies' plans may come to nought (verses 6–9[a]).

(3) Prayer for vengeance upon these enemies (verses 9[b]–11).

(4) Confidence that Jehovah will stand by the righteous (verses 12 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxl–cxliii.

See also Introd. to Ps. xciv (*Authorship and Date*).

1–5. *Prayer for protection.*

1. violent man: rather, 'violent men': Heb. 'men of violences': see on lxxviii. 51.

2. Which imagine: better, 'who devise.'

Continually: Heb. 'every day.'

do they gather themselves: we must (with Pesh., Targ., and most moderns) slightly change the Hebrew and read, 'they stir up much war.'

war: pl. of intensity, so = 'much war,' or 'bitter war.'

3. They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent: the figure is that of a sharpened sword or arrow (see lii. 2, lv. 21, lvii. 4, lix. 7, lxiv. 3). The serpent's tongue is naturally looked upon as inflicting the fatal bite: but see below.

Adders' poison, &c.: the poison of the serpent is not in the tongue, but in a bag below the tongue. These foes, by their slander, inflict the deadliest injury, but do it insidiously: see x. 7 (cf. Job xx. 12), lviii. 4: they are more treacherous than violent.

3[b] is quoted from the LXX in Rom. iii. 13.

Adder: the Hebrew word occurs nowhere else in the O.T.,

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from the violent man:
Who have purposed to thrust aside my steps.
5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the way side;
They have set gins for me. [Selah

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God:
Give ear unto the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
Further not his evil device; *lest* they exalt themselves. [Selah

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and is of uncertain meaning. The LXX explain as 'asp.' A word with the same consonants (the last two transposed) means 'spider.' Its parallelism with **serpent** makes the general sense clear enough.

5. Note the treachery so graphically depicted by the snares, cords, nets, and gins, and see ix. 16, xxxi. 4, xxxv. 7, cxix. 110, cxli. 9, cxliii. 3. In Matt. xxii. 15 ('how they might ensnare') the verb is cognate with the noun in the LXX represented by **snare** (*pagis*: Heb. *pakh*).

gins: traps for catching birds.

6-8. *Prayer for the defeat of the enemies' plans.*

6. I said: better, 'I say': see xvi. 1, xxxi. 14.

7. GOD: GOD and LORD in our A.R.V. represents an original *Yahweh* (Jehovah). For some centuries B. C. the last word was avoided by Jews as being too sacred to be used, and for it the Hebrew word for 'Lord' (*adonai*) was substituted. It is the vowels of this Hebrew word that we have in 'Jehovah,' which is, strictly speaking, no word at all. When, however, *Yahweh* and *Adonai* come together the former is represented by GOD in English and in the Hebrew vowels. 'GOD Lord' stands then for 'LORD Lord': see on cviii. 3 and cix. 21.

Thou hast covered: better, 'Thou coverest' (perf. of experience).

my head: as a helmet which protects the warrior: see lx. 7; Isa. lix. 17; Eph. vi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 8.

day of battle: Heb. 'day of armour,' i. e. the day when armour has to be used.

8. *lest* they exalt, &c.: the versions continue the force of the

As for the head of those that compass me about, 9
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
Let burning coals fall upon them: 10
Let them be cast into the fire;
Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
An evil speaker shall not be established in the earth: 11

---

negative: 'let them not be exalted.' But for this the negative would have to be written a third time (it occurs twice). It is better, with most moderns, to attach the clause to the next verse, making the verb transitive by changing one vowel.

9. Render: (8) Let them not lift up their (9) head on every side of me; Let the mischief,' &c. Selah at the end of verse 8 may be ignored, since it is no part of the Psalm any more than the title.

head: Sym., Jero., Baethgen, &c. translate 'poison.' The Hebrew word for 'head' is spelt similarly, and not seldom identically.

those that compass me about: the Hebrew (one word) is probably an adverbial preposition, not a participle. It is impossible to be satisfied with any translation based upon the M. T. of verses 8 f.

10. Render: 'May He (Jehovah) rain burning coals on them: May He hurl them into miry pits (whence) they cannot arise.'

Let . . . fall: read, 'May He rain,' adding one consonant to the Hebrew verb. The subject is no doubt Jehovah: but it may be indefinite: 'May one rain.' There is probably a reference to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha: see Gen. xix.

deep pits: read 'pits of clay,' or 'of slime,' altering one consonant for another closely resembling it (*h* into *kh*), and thus connecting the Hebrew word etymologically with that rendered 'mire' in Job xxx. 19, and that translated 'slime' in Gen. x. 3. Perhaps the figure is suggested by the 'slime pits' mentioned in Gen. xiv. 10. 'Slime pits,' i. e. wells of bitumen or asphalt, abounded in Bible times in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. There seems in this word another reminiscence of the catastrophe described in Gen. xix. Some render 'deep waters' (suggested by Arabic etymology): many read 'nets,' but 'rising in' or 'out of nets' makes a poor figure.

11. An evil speaker: *lit.* 'a man of tongue,' i. e. 'a slanderer,' as verse 4 shows. A Hebrew verb in what Ewald called 'the conjugation of attack' (*Angriffs-stamm*) is derived from the noun for 'tongue,' and means 'to attack with the tongue,' i. e. 'to slander.'

Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.
12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted,
And the right of the needy.
13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name:
The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

141 A Psalm of David.

1 LORD, I have called upon thee; make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;

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hunt: the violent man who has hunted will be himself hunted by the evil he has done. He will be 'hoist with his own petard.'

12 f. *Confidence that Jehovah will support the faithful.*

13. Surely: the Hebrew word is used also in a restrictive sense as the Arabic *mā*, and it has that force here (=only): 'The righteous will give thanks,' &c., that is the only attitude they will take up: gratitude will be their one all-pervading emotion.

PSALM CXLI.

Theme. Prayer to be preserved from sin and from sinners.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for Jehovah's help (verses 1 f.).
(2) Prayer to be kept from participating in the sin prevailing around (verses 3 f.).
(3) The reproof of a good man welcome (verse 5).
(4) The wickedness and destiny of the foe (verses 6 f.).
(5) Confident prayer to Jehovah for preservation (verses 7–10).
The text of parts of this Psalm is exceedingly corrupt, and the meaning consequently uncertain.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxl–cxliii.

1. I have called: better, 'I call.'
make haste: i. e. 'to help': see xxii. 20, &c.
my voice: LXX 'the voice of my supplication,' as in cxl. 6.

2. Render: 'My prayer is set in right order as incense before thee: The lifting up of my hands (in prayer) as the evening sacrifice.' The optative of the E.VV. is wholly unsuitable, though permitted by the Hebrew. The Psalmist protests that his prayer is as much in order, offered up with as much sincerity and propriety, as the evening oblation in the temple.
incense: here, as in lxv. 15, the reference is to the sweet-smelling savour which arose to God from sacrifices in general.

The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; 3
Keep the door of my lips.
Incline not my heart to any evil thing, 4
To be occupied in deeds of wickedness
With men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
Let the righteous smite me, *it shall be* a kindness; 5
And let him reprove me, *it shall be as* oil upon the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.

There is no allusion to the daily offering of incense on the table of incense (Exod. xxx. 7 f.).

The lifting up, &c.: i. e. in prayer: see Isa. i. 15, where the 'spreading forth of the hands' is parallel to 'making many prayers.'

evening sacrifice: D. Qimkhi inferred from these words that the present Psalm was made at the very outset to be sung as an evening hymn.

4. Incline: the Hebrew verb = 'to bend—this way or that.' The Psalmist wants to go straight on in the right way. With this prayer cf. 'lead us not into temptation,' i. e. 'leave me not lest my heart leans towards evil.'

let me not eat, &c.: he will neither share their luxuries nor unite with them in their corrupt deeds.

eat: see Prov. iv. 17, xxiv. 16. There may be an allusion to the Jewish laws of diet. A modern Jew, if strict, will eat only food that is *kasher* (i. e. pure according to Jewish law).

5. This verse is corrupt to a degree that makes emendation almost beyond hope: the following translation appears to the present writer to convey the intended sense better than any other with which he is acquainted: 'Let the righteous smite me with lovingkindness, and correct me; Oil (so choice) let not my head refuse: But my prayer is continually against their great wickedness.'

righteous: the word is employed sarcastically of the persecuting party: they claimed to have right on their side. The Psalmist will accept the rebuke and chastisement of these men: 'A jewel is a jewel in a swine's snout.' But what he prays against is the great wickedness (*lit.* 'wickednesses') of these men.

***as* oil upon the head:** see cxxxiii. 2 and Matt. vi. 17.

6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock;
And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
7 As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth.
8 For mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord:
In thee do I put my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

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6. Render: 'When their judges (or rulers) have been hurled by (or from) the sides of the rock, They will hear my words, that they are gracious.'

We appear to have in this verse a conditional sentence: the conditional particles are often omitted in Hebrew, though the second part of the sentence is properly introduced by the 'waw apodosis.'

thrown down . . . rock: a common form of punishment in ancient times: see 2 Chron. xxv. 12; Luke iv. 29. When these judges have been themselves judged and punished they will acknowledge how true and wholesome the Psalmist's words were.

7. Render: 'As when one cleaves and splits a rock' (this word has dropped out through its occurrence in verse 6) 'on the earth, Their bones shall be scattered at the entrance' (*lit.* 'mouth') 'of Sheol' (i. e. they shall be put to death). This verse continues the description of the fate of the godless oppressors. For **grave** the Hebrew has 'Sheol': see on lxxxvi. 13.

ploweth: the Hebrew verb (same root as Arabic *fellah*) means 'to cleave,' but never 'to plough,' though in Aramaic the word has the latter sense. We must insert after the verbs the word 'rock,' which has fallen out on account of its occurrence in verse 6. The splitting of rocks was known in the times of the ancient Greeks. Perhaps (so Kirkpatrick) we should understand 'wood.' The first verb is used in 2 Kings iv. 39 of slicing gourds, and the second in Eccles. x. 7 of cleaving wood.

our bones: read 'their bones': so Pesh. and (according to Baethgen) Lucian.

8–10. *Confident prayer for preservation.*

8. For: render, 'Surely.' The Hebrew *ki* has both senses.

mine eyes, &c.: see xxv. 15.

do I put my trust: Heb. 'do I take refuge': see ii. 12, vii. 1, lvii. 1, &c.

leave not, &c.: Heb. 'pour thou not out my life' (*lit.* 'my soul'), which is the proper rendering: see Gen. xxiv. 20. LXX 'take not away my soul.'

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, 9
And from the gins of the workers of iniquity.
Let the wicked fall into their own nets, 10
Whilst that I withal escape.

Maschil of David, when he was in the cave ; a Prayer. 142

I cry with my voice unto the LORD ; 1

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9. See on cxl. 4 f.

10. their own: Heb. 'his own,' 'each into his own net.'

PSALM CXLII.

Theme. Cry for help against persecutors.

I. *Title.* What is the cave referred to in the title, and also in the very similar historical notice in the title of Ps. lvii? In our Hebrew and English Bibles two cave incidents in David's life are recorded, viz. that connected with the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1–5) when David fled from Saul, and that connected with the cave at En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv) when David spared Saul's life. Modern scholarship has made it practically certain that the original Hebrew text had the 'fortress' (not cave) 'of Adullam' (see 1 Sam. xxii. 4 and 2 Sam. xxiii. 14) : so Wellhausen, Budde, Nowack, H. P. Smith, &c. Unless the corruption of the text is older than the titles of this Psalm and of Ps. lvii the cave referred to can be that of En-gedi only. It is an interesting confirmation of the correctness of this textual emendation that most commentators, on quite other grounds, have decided that the cave of En-gedi is the one meant (see verse 8 and Introd. to Ps. lvii). Most readers will be a little shocked to be told that instead of the 'cave' one must in the future speak of the 'fortress of Adullam,' but accuracy seems to demand it.

II. *Contents.* (1) The complaint (verses 1–4).
(2) The prayer (verses 5–7).
The condition of the Psalmist is extreme. He is now apparently in prison or in prison-like misery (verse 8), and brought very low. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, as the author knew right well.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks to Pss. cxl–cxliii.
The dependence of the Psalm on Ps. lxxvii and on Job xi. 20, and much in its style and contents, show that it is post-exilic. No scholar now defends its Davidic authorship.

With my voice unto the LORD do I make supplication.
2 I pour out my complaint before him;
I shew before him my trouble.
3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, thou knewest my path.
In the way wherein I walk have they hidden a snare for me.
4 Look on *my* right hand, and see; for there is no man that knoweth me:
Refuge hath failed me; no man careth for my soul.
5 I cried unto thee, O LORD;

1-4. *The complaint.*

1. Render: 'I cry aloud unto Jehovah; Loudly do I pray for favour.'

With my voice = 'aloud': see iii. 4.

The Psalmist calls attention not to the loudness of the prayer as such, but to the earnestness which the loudness implies.

2 f. Render these verses as follows: 2. 'I pour out my complaint before Him; I show before Him my distress' (*lit.* 'straitness,' see on cvii. 6), 3. 'When my spirit within me is exhausted. In the way in which I walk they hide for me a snare; but thou—thou knowest my path.'

3. overwhelmed: *lit.* 'covered,' so that breathing is difficult: then 'faint,' 'languishing.'

thou knewest: to be removed (with Wellhausen) to the end of the verse: see translation above.

4. Look, &c.: instead of the imperative we must with LXX, Pesh., Targ. read 'I look (looked) . . . see' (saw). No change in the consonants is necessary, since the Infinitive Absolute has often the meaning of the finite verb. The Psalmist looked right and left of him, but found no one to acknowledge him as his protégé (Ruth x. 10, 19). The imperative 'look' addressed to Jehovah is more strange than striking.

on *my* right hand: i. e. where the helper stood; see xvi. 8, cix. 6, 31, cx. 5, cxxi. 5 (but see on): but it is better (with Duhm, &c.) to restore 'and on my left hand,' an addition required by the sense. It had fallen out before the versions were made.

for: better, 'but.'

Refuge, &c.: based on Job xi. 20.

no man careth, &c.: see Jer. xxx. 17.

5-8. *The prayer.*

5. I cried: better, 'I cry.'

I said, Thou art my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: 6
Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto 7
thy name:
The righteous shall compass me about;
For thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

A Psalm of David. **143**

Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications: 1

I said: better, 'I say': see cxl. 6.

my refuge: a different word from that so translated in verse 4. In the latter the prominent idea is that of *escape*, as such. The word in this verse means specially a place of *security* as such.

6. This verse is built up of borrowed words and phrases: see vii. 1, xvii. 1, xviii. 17, xxxi. 15, lxxix. 8.

7. prison: it is a *condition* of misery that is meant, and not a literal *place* of confinement: see cvii. 10 and Isa. xlii. 7, and see on cvii. 6: see, however, also cxliii. 3. It was the presence of this word in the Psalm that prompted the tradition preserved in the title.

The righteous shall compass, &c.: render: 'For the righteous will glorify (thee) when thou showest kindness to me.' The proper Hebrew for this is such as could be easily corrupted to the received text. No other emendation or rendering seems to the present writer equal to that proposed by himself above.

deal bountifully, &c.: see on cxvi. 7.

PSALM CXLIII.

Theme. Prayer for pardon, guidance and deliverance. This is the last of the 'penitential Psalms': see on Ps. cii (*Contents*).

I. *Title.* A David Psalm. The LXX adds to this: 'When his son persecuted him.' Of course Absalom is meant: but the accuracy of this account of the Psalm, though defended by Delitzsch, is too improbable to need refutation.

II. *Contents.* (1) Complaint. The Psalmist is in great distress: all the more because his trouble is due, in a measure, to his own sin (verses 1–6).

In thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness.
2 And enter not into judgement with thy servant;
For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul;
He hath smitten my life down to the ground:
He hath made me to dwell in dark places, as those that have been long dead.
4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is desolate.

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(2) Prayer for guidance and deliverance, and also for the destruction of his foes (verses 7–12).

III. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks to Pss. cxl–cxliii. In his last edition Ewald excluded the present Psalm from the group Pss. cxl–cxliii, though according it a similar date.

1–6. *The complaint.*

1. In this verse **righteousness** has obviously the sense of **faithfulness** which the word has in Isa. xl ff. Yet in the next verse the cognate verb keeps its original sense of being, or of being considered, just.

2. enter not, &c.: 'Do not let me be brought before thy court: I am sinful as all are, and I cannot stand the test of being judged by Thee.' God alone is just; see lxxi. 16.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

be justified: the Hebrew verb is active: it = 'to stand acquitted.' The LXX, Jero. render by the passive as the E.VV.

3. For: introducing the ground of the earnest petition just presented: see verses 3 f.

dark places: reference is perhaps made here to prisons or dungeons: see on cxlii. 7. Probably, however, the word is to be understood metaphorically for a condition of great distress.

as those . . . long dead: i. e. like those long ago dead and now forgotten; see lxxxviii. 5. This is certainly the meaning, and not 'like people dead for ever, with no hope of resurrection,' though Delitzsch defends this latter view: see Jer. li. 39; Eccles. xii. 5.

4. overwhelmed, &c.: see on cxlii. 3.

My heart within me is simply a poet's way of saying 'I myself': see on cxix. 2. **my spirit . . . within me** has the same sense: 'I am faint,' 'languishing.'

desolate: the verb has here the sense which it has in Eccles. vii. 16, i. e. 'destroyed,' 'undone.'

I remember the days of old; 5
I meditate on all thy doings:
I muse on the work of thy hands.
I spread forth my hands unto thee: 6
My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a weary land. [Selah
Make haste to answer me, O LORD; my spirit faileth: 7
Hide not thy face from me;
Lest I become like them that go down into the pit.
Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; 8
For in thee do I trust:
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee.
Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: 9
I flee unto thee to hide me.

---

5 f. The remembrance of what God has done for him encourages him to pray for deliverance.

5. the days of old: see lxxvii. 5, 11.

doings: work: see lxxvii. 12.

6. I spread forth: see xliv. 20, lxxxviii. 9, cxli. 2; Isa. i. 15; Lam. i. 17; and see on cxli. 2.

thirsteth: the verb has dropped out of the Hebrew, but lxiii. 1, whence the present clause is taken, shows that we must restore 'thirsteth.'

as a weary land (longs for water). For **weary** read 'dry': the former word is a gloss in lxiii. 1, and must be omitted: so Baethgen and Duhm.

7-12. *Prayer for guidance, deliverance, and for vengeance upon his enemies.* This half of the Psalm is made up almost wholly of extracts from earlier Psalms, an important fact in determining the date of the Psalm.

7. See xxvii. 9, xxviii. 1, lxix. 17, lxxxiv. 2, cii. 2.

the pit: i.e. Sheol. 'To go down into the pit' means here 'to die.'

8. Cause me to hear: change one letter and read, 'satisfy me with,' as in xc. 14: so Kirkpatrick, Duhm.

in the morning: see xc. 14.

9. Deliver . . . enemies: as lix. 1; cf. xxxi. 15, cxlii. 6.

I flee, &c.: read, 'I take refuge in thee' or 'I flee to thee' (for safety): so the LXX and most moderns. Baethgen reads 'I wait on thee.' The M. T. means 'To thee I hide,' which is senseless, for the verb has no object after it.

10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God:
Thy spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness.
11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake:
In thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.
12 And in thy lovingkindness cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict my soul;
For I am thy servant.

144 *A Psalm* of David.

1 Blessed be the LORD my rock,

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10. Teach me, &c.: see xxv. 4 f., xl. 8.

for thou, &c.: see xxxi. 14, xl. 6.

Thy spirit . . . uprightness: render: 'May thy good spirit lead me in a level' (or 'even') 'path,' i. e. in a path free from pitfalls into which one may fall, and from rough stones over which one may stumble.

land of uprightness: for 'land' read (with Hupfeld) 'path' (changing one consonant): the Hebrew for 'uprightness' means 'what is level,' 'even.'

11. Quicken me: see on cxix. 25.

for thy name's sake: see xxv. 11.

righteousness = 'faithfulness,' as in verse 1.

12. As regards such maledictions, see Introduction to cix, p. 216.

PSALM CXLIV.

Theme. See *Contents.*

I. *Contents.* This Psalm seems to be made up of three distinct parts which had originally no connexion with one another: but see on verses 9–11.

(1) A compilation of passages, mainly from Ps. xviii, in which Jehovah is praised for help in war (verses 1–4), and prayer is offered for further deliverance (verses 5–8).

(2) Prayer of the king to be protected from treacherous barbarians (verses 9–11).

(3) A fragment of some lost Psalm describing the happiness of the people who worship Jehovah (verses 12–15).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See under *Contents.* The use made of other Psalms, the strong Aramaic colouring, and other things, point to a date considerably later than the Exile for each of the three sections of the Psalm.

When citations are made in this Psalm from other Psalms, the notes on the passages cited should be consulted.

1–4. *Praise to Jehovah for help in war.*

Which teacheth my hands to war,
And my fingers to fight:
My lovingkindness, and my fortress, 2
My high tower, and my deliverer;
My shield, and he in whom I trust;
Who subdueth my people under me.
LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? 3
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?
Man is like to vanity: 4
His days are as a shadow that passeth away.
Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: 5
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; 6

---

1. From xviii. 46, 34.

Blessed: same meaning virtually as 'praised': see on cxviii. 26. In verse 15 the other Hebrew word generally translated 'blessed' is rightly rendered 'happy'; see on lxxxiv. 4.

my rock: see on lxxv. 5 and xcv. 1.

fingers: referring perhaps to the use of the bow. It is often, however, as here in parallelism with **hands**, and then with no difference of meaning.

2. From xviii. 2, 47.

For the various figures used to set forth Jehovah's manifold helpfulness see on xviii. 2 (vol. i). God is not here described as a Rock as in xviii. 2: perhaps for the same reason which led the LXX translators to render the word by God, i. e. to avoid any apparent encouragement of idol worship; see on lxxv. 5, xcv. 1.

3 f. *Man's insignificance.* He is wholly undeserving of the favour shown him by Jehovah.

3. From viii. 4; see 2 Sam. vii. 18.

man: see on xc. 3 and ciii. 15.

son of man: i. e. 'human being' (= Latin *homo* and Greek *anthrōpos*). See for 'son' on lxxix. 11.

4. 4^a is a variation of xxxix. 5, 11, or of lxii. 9; 4^b is a variation of Job xiv. 2; see cii. 11, cix. 23; Job viii. 9.

5-8. *A prayer for further deliverance by the manifestation of Jehovah's majesty.*

5. 5^a from xviii. 9^a, 5^b from civ. 32^b, but description is changed into entreaty.

6. From xviii. 14: cf. 2 Sam. xxii. 15.

them: i. e. the enemies, though they are not named.

Send out thine arrows, and discomfit them.
7 Stretch forth thine hand from above;
Rescue me, and deliver me out of great waters,
Out of the hand of strangers;
8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.
9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God:
Upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.
10 It is he that giveth salvation unto kings:
Who rescueth David his servant from the hurtful sword.
11 Rescue me, and deliver me out of the hand of strangers,

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7. From xviii. 16, description being again changed into entreaty.

Rescue: another verb with this general sense; see on lxxiv. 2. The Hebrew word here occurs in this Psalm only, viz. verses 7, 10, and 11, but it is common in Aramaic. Its etymological sense is 'to cut off,' then 'to loosen,' 'set free.'

8. right hand: i. e. 'oath': among the Semites an oath was made by elevating the right hand (pointing to deity). **Their right hand,** &c. means 'their oath is a false oath.'

9-11. *A king's prayer for deliverance from treacherous foes.* The connexion with the foregoing is loose, though the allusion to false oaths in both parts (see verses 8 and 11) forms a link between them, and suggests common authorship.

9. From xxxiii. 2 f.

God: the only other examples of *Elohim* (God) occurring alone as a Divine name in Books IV and V (Pss. xc-cl) are in Ps. cviii (see on), which is compiled out of two Elohistic Psalms, and in cxlv. 1. Perhaps in the latter and in the present verse we should read 'Jehovah' (*Yahweh*).

a psaltery of ten strings: render: 'a ten-stringed harp,' see Introduction, pp. 27 f.

10. 10^{a} from xviii. 50^{a}.

Who rescueth: see on verse 7.

David: an instance of the use of David in the general sense 'king.' Cf. 'Kaiser' (German), 'Czar' (Russian) from 'Caesar.' According to Stade the Messiah is meant: see Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f.; Hos. iii. 5.

his servant: not in the original passage: rhythm requires its omission here.

11. Rescue: see on verse 7.

Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth ; 12
And our daughters as corner stones hewn after the fashion
of a palace ;
When our garners are full, affording all manner of store ; 13

---

hand: Duhm thinks the reference is to the right hand by which oaths are made ; see on verse 8. So he would paraphrase : 'Rescue me from the false oath,' i. e. the treachery of (these) foreigners. See the closing line of the verse.

strangers: Heb. 'foreigners.'

their right hand, &c. : see on 8^b.

12–15. *The happy lot of Jehovah's people.* This is a mere fragment from a poem which is otherwise lost. This specimen is so charming that one cannot but regret the loss of the rest of the song. Verse 12 begins with a relative pronoun which is quite unintelligible, as the noun to which it refers was in the part which is missing. It seems a waste of time and a misuse of ingenuity to try and explain this relative as if it referred to something in the earlier verses of the existing Psalm.

12. plants: better, 'saplings' : what has been newly planted, and sends forth shoots. The same thought is intended as in cxxviii. 3, 'young olive trees.' Baethgen refers to Verg. *Aen.* ix. 674.

grown up: referring to the plants fully grown, though young.

in their youth: referring to the sons.

corner stones: Duhm says that we must here understand those pillars which, in Greek architecture, were carved as female figures—the 'Caryatides.' It is, perhaps, a proper objection that Greek art would be scarcely used to embellish Hebrew poetry, but at a late time Hebrew writers were considerably influenced by Greek thought (cf. the 'Wisdom literature'). Delitzsch, Kay, &c. think that we are to understand here the cornices which were found, and are still to be seen, in the angles of Eastern rooms, elaborately carved and gorgeously coloured.

13. The home is not only to be full of flourishing children, but there is to be an abundance of food for all.

all manner of store: *lit.* 'from kind to kind,' i. e. 'every kind' (of provision). The word here rendered 'kind' is of Persian origin (so Nöldeke), and occurs in 2 Chron. xvi. 14, and in Sir. (Heb.) xxxviii. 28. It answers to the Heb. *mīn.*

And our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands
in our fields;
14 *When* our oxen are well laden;
When there is no breaking in, and no going forth,
And no outcry in our streets;
15 Happy is the people, that is in such a case:
Yea, happy is the people, whose God is the LORD.

145 *A Psalm of* praise; of David.
1 I will extol thee, my God, O King;

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in our fields: the Hebrew word means what is outside (the house), and is used of streets (as distinct from open spaces, see verse 14) and also as here of fields.

14. Render: '(When there is) no breach (in the walls) and no one going forth (as a prisoner), And there is no cry (of distress) in our open spaces.'

When **our oxen are well laden:** the Hebrew so rendered is incapable of rational translation, and it must be regarded as a mere dittograph, through a copyist's mistake, of the Hebrew words in verse 13 translated (our sheep) **bring forth thousands and ten thousands:** the resemblance in the Hebrew is close.

The Hebrew word rendered **oxen** means 'chieftains,' though a mere change of vowels is needed to obtain the word for 'oxen.'

But the abundance of provisions implied in well-laden oxen has been already mentioned (verse 13). Some, however, understand 'oxen capable of carrying burden,' a sense permitted by the passive participle found here: see on xcvi. 4 and cxi. 2. So Targ., Qimkhi, &c.

no breaking in: no invading foe will make a breach in the wall (Neh. vi. 7).

no going forth: as a prisoner taken by a foreign foe: see 2 Kings xxiv. 12; Amos iv. 3. The Hebrew has a fem. participle used as neuter impersonally, *lit.* 'nothing going out.'

no outcry: i. e. no cry of distress by the defeated citizens: see Jer. xiv. 2.

streets: the Hebrew word means broad, open spaces like our squares: this is where the people would gather, and a panic might drive them to yell and howl in their distress. See on verse 13 (**fields**).

15. In this verse the blessings enumerated in verses 12-14 are summed up: 15^b is from xxxiii. 12.

Happy: see on lxxxiv. 4.

PSALMS CXLV—CL.

These 'Hallel' or 'Praise Psalms' owe their origin probably

And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless thee; 2
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; 3
And his greatness is unsearchable.

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to liturgical needs, i. e. they were made to be sung in the temple. Pss. cxlvi–cl all begin and end with the formula 'Praise ye Yah,' i. e. 'Hallelujah.' Ps. cxlv has in its title the word *tehillah* = 'praise.' These six Psalms cxlv–cl are closely united in subject-matter, language, and in poetical form, and they are probably products of the same age, perhaps of the revived interest in worship which followed the dedication of the temple after its desecration by the Syrian army. An older date has been argued from the fact that the recently discovered Hebrew fragment of Sir. seems to imply the prior existence of Ps. cxlvii f.: this would give a date at least twenty years before the time of the Maccabees. But in the common phrases and even paragraphs found in different writings it is always difficult to decide which is original. Ps. cxlix is almost certainly Maccabean, and this carries with it a Maccabean date for the remaining five Psalms of the group.

PSALM CXLV.

Theme. A hymn in praise of Jehovah's bountifulness and compassion.

I. *Contents.* It is an alphabetical Psalm, the last of them, and as in the case of such Psalms generally, the connexion of thought is loose, and does not lend itself readily to logical analysis: the parts are bound by that which is external—the letters of the alphabet—and not much by the thought.

We have here a beautiful song of praise: a bracelet in which one beautiful bead is strung on after another, making a yet more beautiful whole. It is an alphabetic Psalm, but the *nun* strophe has been lost (so Grotius, Ewald, &c.). The LXX (so Vulg.) supplies such a strophe (see under verse 13), but its genuineness is denied by nearly all modern scholars.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See General Introduction to Pss. cxlv–cl.

Baethgen thinks verse 13 excludes a Maccabean date.

1. (*ālēph*). **my God, O King**: observe the note of universalism: not Jehovah, nor King of Israel; cf. verse 9 (**all**): but see on cxliv. 9.

for ever and ever: see on cxix. 44.

2. (*bēth*).

3. (*gīmēl*). 3[a] from xlviii. 2.

4 One generation shall laud thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
5 Of the glorious majesty of thine honour,
And of thy wondrous works, will I meditate.
6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts;
And I will declare thy greatness.
7 They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.
8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.
9 The LORD is good to all;

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4. (*dālēth*). See xix. 3.

5. (*hē*). **Of the glorious majesty of thine honour:** Heb. 'Of the majesty of the glory of thy honour': in Pesh. and one other ancient authority the word 'glory' is omitted. This would relieve the sentence and help the rhythm: render, 'Of the majesty of thy honour,' so Baethgen.

of thy wondrous works: *lit.* 'words' or 'things of,' &c. i. e. 'instances of thy wondrous works,' see on cv. 28. The LXX and Pesh. make a verb of the Hebrew word denoting 'words,' 'things,' rendering the verse thus: 'They will speak of the glorious majesty of thy holiness, and tell of thy wonders.'

6. (*wāw*). **the might of thy terrible acts:** referring to Jehovah's judgements upon the heathen.

I will declare: we must certainly read 'they shall declare,' as the context shows. So the Targ. and some MSS. of the LXX.

thy greatness: render (with *kēth.*, Aq., Jero.), 'thy great deeds': cf. (the parallel) **thy terrible acts.**

7. (*zain*). **utter:** *lit.* 'make to bubble' (like a spring): the same Hebrew word in xix. 2 and cxix. 171.

of thy great goodness: read (changing one vowel), 'of the greatness of thy goodness.'

sing: Heb. 'sing with a loud, piercing voice.' The verb is used especially of the ringing shouts of victorious armies.

righteousness: i. e. faithfulness, as in Isa. xl ff.

8. (*khēth*). Taken from Exod. xxxiv. 6 with trivial change. See lxxxvi. 13, ciii. 8.

of great mercy: Heb. 'great in lovingkindness.'

9. (*tēth*). **good to all:** read, 'good to all those who wait (upon Him).' The LXX has the additional words, but not the word for 'all.'

And his tender mercies are over all his works.
All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O LORD; 10
And thy saints shall bless thee.
They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, 11
And talk of thy power;
To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, 12
And the glory of the majesty of his kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, 13
And thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.
The LORD upholdeth all that fall, 14
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

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tender mercies: Heb. 'compassions.'

10. (*yōdh*). **thy saints**: better, 'thy favoured ones': see vol. i, Note B, pp. 360 f.

11 ff. repeat the thoughts of verses 4–6.

11. (*kaph*). **thy power**: in Hebrew the sing. of the word rendered **thy mighty acts** in verse 4: in verse 11 the sing. occurs as here.

12. (*lāmēdh*). **his mighty acts . . . his kingdom**: the sudden transition from the second person to the third is strange, though in poetry far from unexampled: see pp. 175, 236. Perhaps it is due to the carelessness of the compiler. The LXX keeps up the continuity of the second person, reading 'thy' for 'his.' The Hebrew has the second person from verse 13 to the end of verse 16: then the third person is used to the end of the Psalm as it is in verse 3.

13. (*mēm*). This verse occurs also in Dan. iii. 33 and iv. 31. The present is the original passage, though Hitzig maintains the contrary.

The *nūn* strophe ought to come in here, and it is highly probable that it did exist in the original form of the Psalm.

In the LXX and in the Vulg., which in the Psalms always follows it, a *nūn* strophe is supplied as follows: 'Faithful (Heb. *ne'emān*) is Jehovah in all his words, and holy in all his works.' This strophe is not found in the other versions, and it is generally regarded as an attempt at supplying the place of a lost verse. Duhm, however, accepts it as genuine. The subject cannot be discussed here.

14. (*sāmek*). **raiseth up**: the Hebrew word occurs nowhere in the O. T. except here and in cxlvi. 8. It is common in Aramaic.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee;
And thou givest them their meat in due season.
16 Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways,
And gracious in all his works.
18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
To all that call upon him in truth.
19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him;
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him;
But all the wicked will he destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD;
And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

146 Praise ye the LORD.

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15. (*'ain*). God is pictured as a householder supplying the needs of all. So civ. 27 on which the verse is based.

16. (*pē*). **satisfiest the desire,** &c.: render: '(Thou) satisfiest every living thing with (what thy) good will (supplies).' The word rendered 'desire' corresponds with good (i. e. good things) in civ. 28: it means the feeling in God of being well pleased: His favour: then by metonymy of effect for cause what His favour supplies. The word has often this objective sense in Proverbs.

17. (*tsādhē*). **righteous:** i. e. 'faithful,' as the parallelism proves.

ways: see on ciii. 7.

18. (*qōph*). **nigh:** i. e. to help: see xxxiv. 18, cxix. 151; Deut. iv. 7.

in truth: see Isa. x. 20; John xiv. 23 f.

19. (*rēsh*). **desire:** here the word has its subjective meaning: the feeling of desire as such.

their cry: Heb. 'their cry for help.'

20. (*shīn*). See on cxix. 161–168 (**shin**).

21. (*tāw*). **for ever and ever:** an interpolation from verse 2. The measure of the verse requires its omission.

PSALMS CXLVI—CL.

For general remarks regarding these Hallelujah Psalms see on Pss. cxlv–cl. They begin and end with 'Hallelujah,' though the

Praise the LORD, O my soul.
While I live will I praise the LORD: 2
I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
Put not your trust in princes, 3
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; 4
In that very day his thoughts perish.
Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, 5

'Hallelujah' which closes these Psalms is almost certainly a copyist's addition due to dittography.

PSALM CXLVI.

Theme. Jehovah alone the unfailing Deliverer.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah alone to be trusted: men may fail (verses 1–4).

(2) Jehovah Creator, Judge, Deliverer and King (verses 5–10).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on cxlv–cl.

1–4. *Jehovah alone to be trusted.*

1 f. Compare with the Psalmist's summons to himself to worship Jehovah in ciii. 1, civ. 1, on which these two verses are based.

Though these Psalms are primarily congregational the individual note breaks out often as here.

2. Like civ. 33 with slight changes.

3 f. *Warning against trusting in men.* In verse 5 f. the positive side of the truth is stated and enforced.

3. Based on cxviii. 8 f. Faithless heathen rulers are meant, Syrian, or perhaps Persian.

son of man: i. e. man: see on lxxxix. 25.

help: the Hebrew word is usually rendered 'salvation': it means 'a state of being set at large,' and is cognate with the proper names 'Joshua,' 'Jesus': see on lxxiv. 2, and on cvii. 6.

4. See civ. 29; Isa. ii. 22. The verse occurs in 1 Macc. ii. 63^b, only that in the latter **His breath goeth forth** and **In that very day** are absent. Bickell and Duhm omit them here on metrical grounds, finding support in the Apocrypha passage.

thoughts: an Aramaic word meaning also 'purposes.' It occurs nowhere else in the O. T., though it is found in the Hebrew text of Sir. iii. 24. The verb occurs in Dan. vi. 4 ('to think'), and a cognate noun in Job xii. 5 ('thought').

5–10. *Jehovah's favour displayed in manifold ways.*

5. See xx. 1, xxxiii. 13, cxliv. 15.

Happy: translated 'Blessed' in i. 1, &c.: see on lxxxiv. 4.

Whose hope is in the LORD his God:
6 Which made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that in them is;
Which keepeth truth for ever:
7 Which executeth judgement for the oppressed;
Which giveth food to the hungry:
The LORD looseth the prisoners;
8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind;
The LORD raiseth up them that are bowed down;
The LORD loveth the righteous;
9 The LORD preserveth the strangers;
He upholdeth the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

The Hebrew word occurs twenty-five times in the Psalter, but this is its last occurrence.

hope: an Aramaic word found besides only in cxix. 116.

6. *Jehovah's power in contrast with man's weakness* (see verse 4).

in them: i. e. in heaven, earth, and sea.

7. 7^a is from ciii. 6. With 7^b cf. cvii. 9.

8. 8^a is identical with cxlv. 14^b.

The LORD (i. e. Jehovah) stands at the head of five successive lines in Hebrew as in English: probably to make it very clear that He and no other does the things ascribed to Him.

openeth . . . the blind: the word **eyes** has evidently slipped out of the Hebrew, and must be restored. 'To open the blind' is no more Hebrew idiom than English. Blindness is used to convey the notion of general helplessness: see Deut. xxviii. 29; Job xii. 25, xxix. 18, xxxv. 5, &c.

9. strangers: Heb. (sing.) *ger*, translated 'sojourner' in cxix. 19 (see on). The Hebrew word never means in the O. T. 'proselyte,' by which the LXX here and usually renders it, though in later parts of the O. T. the term has, in addition to its civil, a religious signification: but the *ger* still needs protection (cf. **fatherless and widow**).

fatherless: strictly 'orphans': see on lxxxii. 3.

the way . . . he turneth upside down: the verb means 'to make crooked': the sense is 'God causes the wicked to reach a goal which they have not in view: they seek happiness, but the way they walk in is made, by Divine overruling, to issue in misery.'

The LORD shall reign for ever, 10
Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD; 147
For it is good to sing praises unto our God;
For it is pleasant, *and* praise is comely.
The LORD doth build up Jerusalem; 2

---

10. 10^a = Exod. xv. 18^a.
Praise ye the LORD (Yah): omitted in LXX, Pesh.

PSALM CXLVII.

Theme. Jehovah's love and power displayed in nature.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's love to Israel shown in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and in the restoration of her exiled inhabitants (verses 1-3).
(2) Jehovah's power displayed in nature and in His treatment of men according to their deserts (verses 4-11).
(3) The people of Jerusalem urged to praise Jehovah for what He has done on their behalf (verses 12-14).
(4) Jehovah's gracious doings in nature a pledge of His faithfulness to Israel (verses 15-20).
A rigid analysis of the Psalm is rendered impossible by its liturgical origin and character.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv-cl at p. 350.
The LXX and dependent versions divide this Psalm into two, reckoning verses 1-11 as Ps. cxlvi: see Introd. p. 6.

1-3 *Jehovah's goodness to Jerusalem.*
1. Praise ye, &c.: inserted, by mistake, in verse 1 instead of in the title; see 'Hallelujah Psalms,' p. 226 f. The misplacement of this liturgical formula arose through the mistaken insertion of the Hebrew particle (*ki*) rendered **For,** which has come into the first line from the second by dittography, and which is not represented in the Pesh. The verse itself should then be translated: 'It is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, (and) praise is comely.' We then reduce the three lines of verse 1 to two (distich), corresponding to every verse in the Psalm except verse 8; the liturgical summons taking its proper place in the title and not in the Psalm itself. If the Hebrew word *ki* is retained it must be rendered 'Surely,' not **For.**

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
3 He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
4 He telleth the number of the stars;
He giveth them all their names.
5 Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;
His understanding is infinite.
6 The LORD upholdeth the meek:
He bringeth the wicked down to the ground.
7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing praises upon the harp unto our God:

---

2. 2^b is from Isa. lvi. 8 with one trivial change.

3. Based on Isa. lxi. 1: cf. Hos. vi. 1 and Ps. cxxxvii.

4-11. *Jehovah's power manifested in nature and among men.*

4 f. Based on Isa. xl. 26, 28.

4. He telleth the number, &c.: i. e. He reckons up the number of the stars, a task beyond man's power (Gen. xv. 15): He knows how many there are: or, He assigns a number to the stars; determines how many of them are to be: so Hengstenberg, Ewald, Hitzig, Hupfeld. The Hebrew and the parallelism support this last interpretation.

He giveth them all their names: better, 'He calls all of them by (their) names,' i. e. He calls them up to appear before Him to report themselves, just as soldiers have to answer when the muster roll is called: see Isa. xl. 26.

5. mighty in power: Heb. 'abundant in power': see Isa. xl. 26.

infinite: Heb. 'innumerable.' But this cannot be said of Jehovah's understanding, as our English translators saw. We must read 'unsearchable,' from the parallel passage in Isa. xl. 28. The word 'number' got into verse 5 from verse 4 by dittography: 'there is no searching' (=unsearchable), becoming 'there is no number'='without number' ('innumerable').

6. God's love and power are manifested not only in inanimate nature, but in His treatment of men.

upholdeth: the same word in cxlvi. 9.

7. Duhm thinks that with the new summons to praise God in this verse we have the opening of a new Psalm.

harp: better, 'lyre': see Introd. p. 28.

Who covereth the heaven with clouds, 8
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
He giveth to the beast his food, 9
And to the young ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: 10
He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, 11
In those that hope in his mercy.
Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; 12
Praise thy God, O Zion.

---

8. See civ. 13 f. This verse is the only tristich in the Psalm when we have removed 'Praise-ye-Yah' outside from verse 1 to the title. The LXX add to verse 8 from civ. 14 'and grass for the service of men.'

Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains: Kay renders, 'Who makes the mountains to shoot forth grass,' which the Hebrew allows but does not necessitate.

upon the mountains: i. e. beyond the reach of man's care and cultivation. Kay gives illustrations of this thought from several writers.

9. See cxlv. 15; Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24.

young ravens: the Hebrew means simply 'ravens': *lit.* 'sons of the raven.' But 'sons' (usually rendered 'children') 'of Israel' do not mean the youthful portion of the nation: see on cvii. 8.

cry: according to the LXX 'who call upon God.' Their cry is a prayer. It is probably, however, only the cry as such of the raven that is meant. According to Kay the thought is—'though the raven sends up such a harsh scream God does not disregard it'; a very fanciful conjecture.

10 f. follow xxxiii. 16–18 (see on). Jehovah takes pleasure in what is morally excellent, not in physical strength or agility.

10. horse: the war-horse is meant: see Job xxxix. 19–25.

legs of a man: cf. Homer's epithet for Achilles, 'swift.' In ancient warfare, much more than now, swift-footedness was extremely necessary in a warrior, as well as strength.

11. mercy: better, 'lovingkindness.'

12–14. *Jehovah's goodness to Jerusalem.*

12. With verse 12 the LXX, Jero., Pesh., and probably Aq., Theod., Sym., began a new Psalm: so also Duhm and Cheyne(-), though the latter does not, like the former, make two independent

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
14 He maketh peace in thy borders;
He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
15 He sendeth out his commandment upon earth;
His word runneth very swiftly.
16 He giveth snow like wool;
He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.
17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels:
Who can stand before his cold?

Psalms of verses 1-11. For the Psalm which opens with this verse the LXX has the title: 'Hallelujah' (a Psalm of) Haggai and Zechariah.'

Praise the LORD: the Hebrew verb here is not that found in 'Hallelujah,' but a verb of the same sense commonly used in Aramaic.

13. the bars, &c.: Delitzsch, Kay, and others refer to Nel.. iii. 3, 6, 13 f., 15.

14. 14^a is an imitation of Isa. lx. 17: see lxxxi. 16; Deut. xxxii. 14.

He maketh peace, &c.: Heb. 'Who makes thy boundary (to be) in a state of peace': the construction is the same as that in cxx. 6 (see on).

thy borders: the Hebrew noun is sing., and means first what bounds, then, by metonymy, of contained for containing, it came to mean 'bounded land,' 'territory.'

finest of the wheat: Heb. (as RVm.) 'fat of the wheat.'

15-20. *Nature's confirmation of Jehovah's faithfulness.*

15 f. are influenced by Isa. lv. 10 f.

15. God's word is personified as in cvii. 20. In later Judaism (Targums, &c.) 'Word of God' came to be a name of God; primarily a substitute for the Divine name to avoid anthropomorphisms.

16. snow. During the author's tour in Palestine (Dec. 1888) he was detained in Jerusalem three days beyond the contemplated time, because the snow storms were so vehement, and the roads to Jaffa quite blocked by snowdrifts.

17. (ice) like morsels: or 'like crumbs.' The hail, which is meant, was like crumbs of bread.

Who can stand, &c. The question seems to Derenbourg and Duhm absurd, but many even in Palestine have been known to

He sendeth out his word, and melteth them : 18
He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.
He sheweth his word unto Jacob, 19
His statutes and his judgements unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation : 20
And as for his judgements, they have not known them.
Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD. **148**
Praise ye the LORD from the heavens :
Praise him in the heights.
Praise ye him, all his angels : 2
Praise ye him, all his host.

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die of cold : see on verse 16. Derenbourg reads, 'Before his cold the water stands frozen,' and Duhm prefers this to the M. T.

18. See Deut. iv. 7 f.

his word: the word which causes snow, ice, and hail makes these melt in due season.

19 f. The word of Jehovah, operative on nature, provides also a revelation for the chosen people.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Theme. Let heaven and earth praise Jehovah.

I. *Contents.* (1) Let all in heaven praise Jehovah (verses 1-6). (2) Let all that is on earth praise Him (verses 7-14).

A beautiful and bold Psalm, full of striking personifications and apostrophizations.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl. This Psalm is the most general in the group. There is nothing national in it except in the last verse. It is a universal song of praise.

1-6. *Let all that is in heaven praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise: the verb in 'Hallelujah.'

from the heavens: cf. verse 7, 'from the earth.' Heaven and earth are the two centres of the universe, and the praises of Jehovah are to ring out from both.

in the heights: i. e. of heaven (Job xvi. 19, xxv. 2).

2. host: read 'hosts' (pl.) with the ancient versions and the Massorites (*qr.*), and as required by the parallelism (**angels**) : see ciii. 21, on which the present passage is modelled. The sense of

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon:
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
And ye waters that be above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD:
For he commanded, and they were created.
6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.
7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
Ye dragons, and all deeps:

'hosts' is explained by **angels:** heavenly bodies are referred to in verse 3: see 1 Kings xxii. 19; Neh. ix. 4. Olsh., &c. (so *keth.*) prefer the sing. **host.**

3. stars of light: i. e. 'stars that carry the light,' 'luminaries' (Gen. i. 14). The LXX, Pesh., Targ. read 'stars and light.'

4. heavens of heavens: i. e. 'the loftiest heaven,' the Hebrew superlative: cf. 'King of Kings,' &c. The idea of a plurality of heavens seems implied, either three (see 2 Chron. xii. 12) or seven (so the Talmud).

waters that be above the heavens: see *Hebrew Cosmology*, p. 174 f.

5. Between the two lines of this verse the LXX, Pesh., Targ. insert the words 'For He spake and they were made': so PBV. The addition is taken from xxxiii. 9, and is not genuine.

6. stablished: He supports as well as creates the universe: see Sir. xliii. 16; Col. i. 17.

He hath made a decree, &c.: this rendering follows the LXX and Jero. The following more correctly reproduces the Hebrew, Pesh., and Targ.: 'He has given them a statute and' (='which') 'they cannot transgress,' i. e. the heavens, &c. can do no other than obey the Divine behest. The subject of the latter verb ('transgress') is in Hebrew indefinite. For **decree** see Introd. to Ps. cxix, p. 254.

7-13. *Let all that is in earth praise Jehovah.*

7. dragons: *lit.* 'extended creatures.' The monsters of the deep are obviously meant, but the word in the singular is employed for the primaeval monster of ancient Semitic mythology: see on lxxiv. 13 f.

Baethgen adopts the very improbable hypothesis that water spirits are meant: see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 161.

Fire and hail, snow and vapour; 8
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word:
Mountains and all hills; 9
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
Beasts and all cattle; 10
Creeping things and flying fowl:
Kings of the earth and all peoples; 11
Princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and maidens; 12
Old men and children:
Let them praise the name of the LORD; 13
For his name alone is exalted:
His glory is above the earth and heaven.
And he hath lifted up the horn of his people, 14
The praise of all his saints;

---

8. Fire: i. e. lightning.

vapour: i. e. mists. LXX, Pesh., Jero. read 'ice.'

9. See civ. 16.

10. Various kinds of animals: based on Gen. i. 24 f.

Beasts: 'Wild animals.'

cattle: 'tame animals.'

11 f. Classes of men enumerated. Man is named last because he is the crown of creation: see Gen. i. 26.

The Psalmist arranges human beings according to station (verse 11), sex and age (verse 12).

13 f. According to Duhm these verses were originally a marginal gloss, as they appear to disturb the symmetry of the Psalm.

13. is exalted: see Isa. xii. 4.

His glory: better, 'His majesty': see viii. 1, civ. 1, cxlv. 3; Hab. iii. 3.

above the earth and heaven: referring to the two parts of the Psalm.

14. This verse is cited in Sir. li. 12: but one cannot be certain that the Psalm is older than that book (say B. C. 180), as there may be an older writer from whom both quoted.

And he hath lifted up, &c.: LXX (not Jero. as Baethgen wrongly says) read the fut., 'And he will lift up,' &c. All the other ancient versions agree with the M. T. and the R. V. Concerning the lifting up of the horn see note on lxxv. 4.

praise: i. e. the object of praise.

Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.
Praise ye the LORD.

149 Praise ye the LORD.
Sing unto the LORD a new song,
And his praise in the assembly of the saints.
2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:

---

a people near unto him: far better read with Riehm. (Hupfeld) and Duhm, 'a people acceptable to Him.' The M. T., though followed by the ancient versions, makes very poor sense.

PSALM CXLIX.

Theme. Israel's song of triumph.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel summoned to praise God for His deliverance (verses 1–5).

(2) Joy of the righteous in their victory, and a resolve to destroy the foe (verses 6–9).

The spirit of the Psalm is vindictive in a high degree, reminding one more of the Book of Esther than of the sermon on the mount.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl. The Psalm has been largely accepted as Maccabean. The ardour, courage and consciousness of strength which it breathes are eminently suitable to that age.

1–5. *Israel summoned to praise Jehovah for the deliverance He has granted.* The Psalm seems to have been inspired by some great event which brought the nation very much gladness: whether or not that was the deliverance from Babylon, the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, or some victory over the Syrians we can never finally decide unless some fresh decisive facts are brought to light.

1. Praise ye, &c. belongs to the title.

new song: a new blessing calls forth a new song: see xxxiii. 3, xcvi. 1.

2. assembly of the saints: render, 'the assembly' or 'congregation of the favoured ones': the same expression occurs in 1 Macc. ii. 42: in the LXX, for the Hebrew word rendered **saints** we have *Asidaioi*, a name given in the Maccabean and later days to the Jews that were loyal to the law and zealous for its observance.

him (that made him): in Hebrew may be plural, and is generally so construed: 'them (that made him)' must be then explained as plural of majesty, as *Elohim*: see on lxxvi. 4. But

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
Let them praise his name in the dance: 3
Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.
For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: 4
He will beautify the meek with salvation.
Let the saints exult in glory: 5
Let them sing for joy upon their beds.
Let the high praises of God *be* in their mouth, 6
And a two-edged sword in their hand;
To execute vengeance upon the nations, 7
And punishments upon the peoples;

---

the Hebrew may also be, and here almost certainly is, singular. That which makes the form seem plural is the survival of a final *yōd*, which really belongs to the root and not to the plural ending.

3. in the dance: LXX 'in choirs.' In primitive religions dancing played a very important part, though it is now, owing to its associations, often regarded as anti-religious: see Exod. xv. 20; Judges xi. 34: cf. Ps. cxviii. 27, and Delitzsch, *Expositor*, 1886 (2), p. 81 f. Religious dances are, at the present time, to be seen in Spain (Seville) and in other Christian countries.

timbrel: 'hand drum.' It is mentioned in connexion with dancing in lxv. 5 and Exod. xv. 20.

4. meek: so LXX, Jero., Duhm. Baethgen renders 'sorrowing ones.'

5. saints: better, 'favoured ones.'

upon their beds: resting, free from tears and sorrow at night time (iv. 4, vi. 6), but they **sing** in their beds, not fearing the treachery of false friends, or the open hostility of avowed foes.

6-9. *Joy of the righteous in their victory: resolve to avenge their foes.*

6. Whilst they praise Jehovah with their mouths they are to wield the sword with their hands: see Neh. iv. 10; 2 Macc. xv. 26 f. The Maccabees thought they were fighting the Lord's battles, just as Mohammed (at first) and Cromwell did.

mouth: *lit.* 'throat.'

two-edged sword: so LXX, Jero., Pesh.: see Judges iii. 16. The Hebrew is 'a sword of mouths,' i. e. an all-devouring sword.

7. See Isa. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4.

punishments: Heb. 'chastisements.'

8 To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron;
9 To execute upon them the judgement written:
This honour have all his saints.
Praise ye the LORD.

150 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise God in his sanctuary:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
2 Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:

---

8. What is here forecasted belongs to the prophetic picture of the Messianic time: see Isa. xlv. 14, xlix. 7, 23, lx. 3 f.

nobles: *lit.* 'honoured men,' then 'honourable men': so Isa. xxiii. 8 f.; Nah. iii. 10.

9. judgement written: see on cxxxix. 16. The reference is to the judgement preordained for men by God: see Isa. lxv. 6, x. 1; Job xiii. 26.

PSALM CL.

Theme. A burst of jubilant joy.

I. *Contents*: see *Theme*.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl.

1. sanctuary: the place where Jehovah dwells, i. e. heaven (see next clause): so Delitzsch, Baethgen, &c.: see xxix. 2 and cf. parallelism. Hupfeld thinks it is the earthly temple that is meant: see xx. 2, lxiii. 2, lxxiv. 2, xcix. 1 f., 9. When Jerusalem and its temple had been destroyed God's dwelling was thought to be in heaven on the 'firm immovable firmament,' and no longer in the house, once made by human hands. Note that heaven is above the firmament: see *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f. In both clauses of the verse it is the inhabitants of the upper heaven who are addressed.

firmament of his power: better (according to Hebrew idiom), 'His strong firmament': see on civ. 3.

2. his mighty acts: see cvi. 2, cxlv. 4, 11, 12.

his excellent greatness: Heb. 'the abundance of His greatness.'

3. trumpet: Heb. 'the ram's horn': see Introd., p. 28 ff.

Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and dance: 4
Praise him with stringed instruments and the pipe.
Praise him upon the loud cymbals: 5
Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. 6
Praise ye the LORD.

psaltery and harp: better, 'harp and lyre': see Introd. p. 28.

4. timbrel: see on cxlix. 3.

dance: see on cxlix. 3.

stringed instruments: Heb. 'strings': so in xlv. 8.

the pipe: A.V. 'organs'[1]: see Introd. p. 27. Benzinger and Nowack hold that the 'bagpipe' is meant. The LXX, Sym. assume it to be a stringed instrument, which is certainly wrong. All that we can be sure of is that the Hebrew word stands for some kind of wind instrument. The modern organ with its key-board, &c. was entirely unknown for some centuries after Old Testament times.

5. loud cymbals: *lit.* 'cymbals that can be (well) heard.' The Hebrew word occurs only here and in 2 Sam. vi. 5, and denotes metallic clappers similar to those used at the present time in Turkish military bands. Clericus, Pfeiffer, &c. think that castanets are meant; but it is more than doubtful whether castanets were known among the ancient Hebrews, though modern Arabs use them much.

high sounding cymbals: *lit.* 'cymbals having a loud, shrill sound.' Probably the same instrument is meant in both parts of the verse; both the descriptions apply to the clappers spoken of above. If we are to make a difference, it would be safest to regard the last-named instrument as smaller and sharper-toned than the other, and not (as Hupfeld, Ewald, &c. hold) the reverse.

[1] In Tudor English the term 'organ' was applied to several musical (especially wind) instruments.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

ZION

From the time of the Emperor Constantine I (d. A. D. 337) it has been the custom to speak of two separate hills or mountains in the south of Jerusalem, separated by the Tyropoean or Cheesemongers' valley; that to the west, called Zion, is supposed by tradition to have been the site of the royal buildings erected by David[1], that to the east being Mount Moriah on which the temple was built. Modern travellers will be familiar with this nomenclature, as it is perpetuated in the guide-books and by the civic authorities at Jerusalem. Yet it is certainly wrong, and most misleading to Bible readers. We know from Bible accounts that the stretch of ground on which the royal palace and the adjoining structures stood was in immediate juxtaposition to the temple area: see article 'Temple' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, by the present writer. The following diagram, reproduced from the above article by permission of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, represents graphically the relative positions of the buildings erected by Solomon in the south of Jerusalem.

There could not have been a valley spanned by a bridge between the two sets of buildings, the secular and the sacred, as the old tradition implies. The modern mount Zion is much higher than the modern mount Moriah, but, according to O. T. accounts[2], the palace occupied lower ground than the temple; the old city, the city of David with its fortress, standing on ground still lower[3].

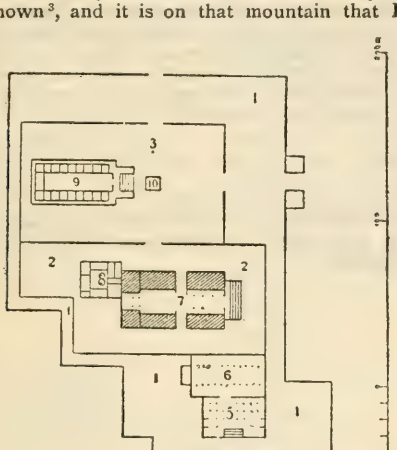
There are two different levels on the modern Haram-esh-Sherif and its southern prolongation: (1) that on which the temple was built, slightly to the west of the so-called Mosque of Omar; (2) south-east of the level just named there is another somewhat lower, and it is on this last that Solomon's palace and connected buildings were almost certainly erected. The city of David, or the fortress of Zion, stood on the western extremity of this ridge, some 1,200 feet to the south of the present wall, but on lower ground than that which held the palace. The Biblical name Zion embraced the whole area west of the Tyropoean valley on which stood the whole complex of Solomonic buildings pictured in the

[1] 1 Kings vii. xxxvi. 12.

[2] 2 Kings xi. 19; Jer. xxii. 1, xxvi. 10,

[3] 1 Kings ix. 24.

diagram below. Many passages in the O. T. are senseless if Zion and the temple hill were separated by such a valley as divides the modern Zion and Moriah. Zion is the 'holy mountain[1],' and the chosen habitation of Jehovah[2]: it is in Zion that Jehovah makes Himself known[3], and it is on that mountain that He is to be



PLAN OF ROYAL BUILDINGS.

(By permission of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, from the article 'Temple' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*)

1. The Great Court.
2. The 'other' or Middle Court.
3. The Inner (or Temple) Court.
4. House of Lebanon.
5. Porch of Pillars.
6. Throne Porch.
7. Royal Palace.
8. Harem.
9. Temple.
10. Altar.

worshipped[4]. Since the temple was the principal feature of Jerusalem, Zion, the mountain on which it was built, came to stand

[1] Ps. ii. 6; Isa. ii. 2, &c.
[2] Pss. ix. 11, lxxiv. 2, lxxvi. 2.
[3] Pss. xiv. 7, xx. 2, liii. 6, &c.
[4] Ps. lxv. 1f.; Jer. xxxi. 6, &c.

for the whole city[1]. Hence the 'Daughters of Zion[2]' are the 'Inhabitants of Jerusalem.'

The identity of Zion and the temple hill is assumed in the Apocrypha[3] and also in early Rabbinical writings.

The traditional conception of the separateness of the two mountains Zion and Moriah is supported in the writings of Reland, Robinson, Ritter, de Vogue, Stanley, Conder, and others: but the view put forth in this note is the one defended by nearly all recent scholars, and it is so manifestly the right one that it seems now wonderful that any other could have been held[4].

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[1] Pss. cxxvi. 1, cxliv. 10; Isa. i. 27, x. 24.

[2] Cant. iii. 11; Isa. iii. 16 f.

[3] 1 Macc. iv. 37 f., v. 34, vii. 33, &c.

[4] See the admirable article on *Sion*, by George Adam Smith, in the *Expositor*, Jan., 1905. The above note had been written before this article appeared.

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